

SAVONAROLA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

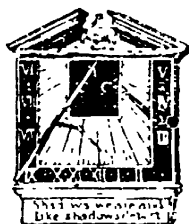
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A CITY'S TRAGEDY

BY

NEWMAN HOWARD



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DOCUMENTATION

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TO
AN UNKNOWN FRIEND

SCENES.

ACT I.

FERRARA : DUKE ERCOLF'S COURT. REVELS.

Many years' interval.

ACT II.

PISA, during the French occupation : PALAZZO STROZZI.

(*a*) without ; (*b*) within.

ACT III.

FLORENCE : THE DUOMO.

ACT IV.

FLORENCE : THE PIAZZA. (The Trial by Fire, and after.)

ACT V.

FLORENCE : (*a*) THE HALL OF THE GREATER COUNCIL ;

(*b*) THE PIAZZA.

The Author has in parts of this Play permitted himself a fuller development, both of Theme and Character, than the staged Drama would require.

PERSONS.

FRA JEROME (<i>Girolamo</i>) SAVONAROLA	} Dominicans or Blackfriars.
Fra Domenico	
Fra Silvestro	
Fra Beccedetto	
FRA MARIANO, a Franciscan or Greyfriar.	
KING CHARLES VIII. of France.	
Guillaume Briçonnet, his Minister.	
ROBERTO STROZZI, an old Florentine Notable.	
Niccolini, a Brother of Mercy, sometime his servant.	
FRANCESCO VALORI, of the Piagnoni (<i>Savonarola's</i>) faction.	
CINI, a convert to the Piagnoni.	
GIULIANO MAZZINGHI, of the Arrabbiati (<i>Rabids</i>).	} Hostile to Savonarola.
PIERO degli ALBERTI, of the Timpidi (<i>Tipids</i>).	
DOLFO SPINI	
'CECCO CFI } of the Compagnacci (<i>Rakes</i>).	
GIAN RIDOLFI, of the Medici faction.	
The Secretary of the "Eight" (<i>Magistracy of Florence</i>).	
An Eccentric (<i>Michel Angelo</i>).	
LARO, a Philosopher.	

LAODAMIA, daughter of Roberto Strozzi.

Monna Livia, her Aunt.

Romolino (the Papal Agent); The Bishop of Vasoria; Florentine Dames and Citizens; Mechanics; A Porter; A Usurer; A Tramp; "Children of the King" French and Italian Officers, &c.

Grateful is slumber : happiest he, God wot,
Who sleeps in stone while shame and woe endure ;
Who feel, who see--once rich--are now most poor :
And blind eyes wealth : ah, hush ! and wake ye not !

MICHAEL ANGELO (*For the statue of "Night,"*
his Thetis in stone of Florence Enslaved ;

ARGUMENT

(1) SAVONAROLA, in his youth, loved Laodamia Strozzi. But to save his life from a plot laid by Lapo, his rival, she feigned contempt of his birth, and plighted to this Lapo her troth. He thereupon dedicated his life to the cause of the redemption of Italy, now, with the Pope at its head, given over to violence, hypocrisy, and vice.

(2) Years pass, and, as preacher and prophet in Florence, he has long foretold the coming of a new Cyrus, who shall purge the Church. And, behold, King Charles of France, with a mighty army, appears before Florence, threatening her destruction. But Savonarola saves the city and becomes its master. For he subdues the King to his will, pledging him to restore Pisa and Leghorn, and to chastise Rome, and Alexander Borgia, her profligate Pope. But in the hour of his triumph, being now a monk, he again meets Laodamia. Her love and sacrifice are disclosed, and his passion is rekindled. Now also, Lapo, spurned after marriage, reappears; and not recognising him, Laodamia is beguiled into a plot to entice Savonarola from his post with the offer of a Cardinal's hat.

(3) Abandoned by Charles, but still master of Florence, Savonarola finds himself pursued by the vengeance of Pope Borgia and his allies. He appeals to Florence to hold firm by the Just Cause; but, being both impatient of virtue and greatly injured in their commerce, the citizens revolt. Pisa and Leghorn are by this time at the Pope's disposal, and of these Lapo has procured the offer: for the city also peace and restored commerce, for Savonarola a Cardinal's hat. The price is the desertion of his cause. Laodamia, thinking once more to save him, joins Lapo in urging this surrender; but his conscience overcomes the temptation.

(4) Not so the conscience of Florence. His appeal fails, and the citizens' faith in him wavers, being rooted, not in right, but in self-interest and the belief in his miraculous powers. His followers are therefore stung by Lapo and his enemies to put these powers to the test by invoking Divine intervention in a trial by fire. The trial is decreed by the Magistracy, and the blame of its failure falls upon Savonarola. He is assaulted, rescued, and recaptured; Laodamia falls in the struggle, and regaining consciousness, beholds him delivered over in chains to his enemies.

(5) The city, defiant of its conscience, now plunges deeper. Justice is prostituted to the dictates of the infuriated Pope, Savonarola is tortured, false confessions are procured, and finally he is condemned to an ignominious death. He passes his last night on bare stones in the Hall of Mercy that he had built. There, silently, one ministers to him, robed in black from head to foot: now must he behold the face, not of Laodamia, but of that Eternal Righteousness for whose cause he suffers death. But, as for the city, its stifled conscience cries, but too late. In his scaffold Florence sees a cross, and in the ringhiera, where they strip him of his raiment, the pratorium of the fated Jews. Now hover the avenging furies that afflicted Italy thereafter unto the third and fourth century. She is weighed in the balance and found wanting, and her kingdom is given unto those Medes and Persians of the North among whom, in the days that followed, the love of trade and empire was not greater than the hatred of violence, hypocrisy, and vice.

SAVONAROLA

A CITY'S TRAGEDY

ACT I

SCENE.—*The Court of Ercolè, Duke of Ferrara. Revels.*

Enter, amid the revellers, the Greyfriar, Fra Mariano; and with him Francesco Valori, both of Florence.

Mariano. And this, Valori, is Ferrara's Court !

We looked for all the lights of Italy,

And lo, a pack of exiles driven from Florence !

Valori. At cross-roads, Padre, seek for birds and bones.

Mariano. Carrion fowl : they whet their beaks, they croak,—

A gruesome chorus, 'faith ; but Florence takes

The tune of all the ages in her octave.

Valori. And a merry tune it is. Good Mariano,

There is a stripling here of Ercolè's Court

Much given to dreams, and musings in the starlight :

There, where the poplars shiver in the wind,

Watching the cold grey river curl and creep,

Like souls that brood on death, last night I met him,

And fell a-talking. Padre, I know not which,—

Either the lurid sunset or his voice, --

Shook me as with the foreblast of a storm.

This young man thinks that on our Tuscan tune

God's trump will crash in strangely.

Mariano.

As for me,

I stomach not these youngsters of Ferrara.

Contrast them with Lorenzo's satellites :

Signor, 'tis Athens on the Arno : there

Socrates walks with Charmides again.

But here we find no taste,—Messer, no taste :

The only sin the church should never pardon.

Valori. Not at a price ? For murder, now, they say,

The market price runs at a thousand ducats.

Mariano. Ah, signor, you are merry. As for Ferrara,

Awhile ago these outlaws clucked of treason :

Ten plots a year, they say ; and nothing hatched.

Now they are mum, Sir. Like the rest of us,

They peck the straw of Plato ;—Sir, they emulate

The Florentine Academy !

Valori. Ha ha !

Our Platonists will tremble for their laurels. . .

Orsù ! good padre, there goes Monna Livia !

Mariano. A pouch well lined with gold. What gift
goes with her,—

Certes, what goddess ?

Valori. Roberto Strozzi's daughter

Mariano. Ah, yes : Laodamia, Livia's niece :

I knew her as a child. The kitten plays ;

The cat is tetchy.

Valori. Sad her charms are squandered

God made the kittens for the friars to stroke,—

Eh, padre, eh ?

Mariano. Messer is wont to jest.

And who addresses them ?

Valori. Savonarola,

Son of the duke's physician.

Mariano. That's the man !

Ha, brave ! He dared accost me,—spoke

Florence,—

Plague on the puppy's insolence !—enquired,

Fumbling for phrases, "Had I interest?
 Oh, would I not befriend an aged exile?"
 I' faith, i' faith, Duke Ercole's serving men
 Lack manners,—stink o' the kitchen,—Sir, they
 stink!

Valori. Truly, in Florence even your turnspit knows
 A popular preacher is a little pope.

Mariano. Messer?

Valori. Nay, pardon. The youth would help the Strozzi,
 Being, they say, enamoured of the maid.

Mariano. Raw clowns will serve them ill.

Valori. Padre, you err.
 The Strozzi's pride mounts high: they use him not.
 He has a zeal too rare: a smouldering fire
 Sleeps in his eyes: you noticed?

Mariano. By your leave,
 My wits have other wheat to thresh than this
 Of quizzing contadini. Has he power,
 Interest with Ercole,—friends to forward him,—
 Wealth or illustrious birth?

Valori. No interest save
 Some intimate converse with the undying dead,
 No wealth except the unminted currency
 Of opulent ideas, no lustre but
 The glow of a great light within his eyes,
 And in his voice a murmur of rushing rain
 That breaks upon the fever of the hour,
 Aquilo upon Maremma. Padre, note:
 I have some zest and liking for the youth
 Since yesternight. . . . Come, come! I take an ague
 Scenting your Livia's varnish.

• *They pass, and mingle with the revellers in the rear.
 Monna Livia and Laodamia come forward.
 Niccolini, a servant, walks behind them.*

Mariano. Ears to the grating—stretched along the reeds—
Is it a fit?

Livia. No . . . Monstrous! How they stare!
And, padre, think! This child acknowledged him,—
Yes, before all the Court! How folk will chatter!
This comes of letting popolani boys
Play with your daughter in the nursery.
I warned Roberto. Bah! a mere apothecary,
And, certes, moonstruck, mad! And yet to Lapo,
A youth whose fortune is on all men's tongues,
She is disdainful. . . . Ah, he is up again,
Pressing his temples. . . . Down! Flop on the floor!
Can anyone doubt he is crazed?

Mariano. None, by the Mass!

Laodamia. Ah no! My God! He listens! Horrible!
There you can hear the captives clanking chains.
Sobbing and groaning; children too; ah me!
I heard it. I—I am gay; soon I forget:
Poor Girolamo, he cannot: he is so pitiful. . . .
Ever the joy and music here: but there,
Down there the dark and anguish. Oh my God!
Come, Aunt! I cannot stay. I would go home.
Come quickly!

Livia. Fool!—and in the padre's presence!

'Cecco Cei. [*struts in, singing to his lute, with Gini and Dolfi Spini*]

Don, don, don!
Where the devil are ye gone?
With a dame or a damigel-la?
With a neat little paparel-la,*
With a green dress on,
And the neck of a swan,
And the eyes of a shy agnel-la?

* Green goose.

Cini. Why that caper, *barlam*?

Cei. To catch the eye of—

Hola! She sees us!

Dolfo. Who?

Cei. The fair Vannoza.

Cini. Finger on lip, a pretty pout.

Dolfo. A kiss?

Cini. See, yonder comes Mazzinghi, fresh from Rome:
She greets him.

Enter Giuliano Mazzinghi.

Cei. Bah! His mouth's a flint, a whinstone

Her lip's a rose; it would not kiss a rock.

"Silence!" she says. She watches Savonarola.

Cini. What, Girolamo?

Cei. Yes, ye gods: behold,

Yonder he sprawls—half lunatic, yet half

Power, fellows, power!

Don, don, don!

Where the devil—

I say, sweet Dolfo,

If your Don Roderigo Borgia,

Croesus and Cardinal, were Papa of Rome,

And she, the pretty 'Nozza, his Pappalecca—

Dolfo. Fellow, what then?

Cei. The devil only knows.

Ask Messer Savonarola.

Dolfo. Gnaf-fé! Why him?

Cei. Is not his father Duke's apothecary,

His mother Dame Apocalypse? This fit

Precedes a prophecy. Now let us pray.

[Sings] Hail to the merry merry month of May !
Flutter little linnets on the wild-wood spray ;
Titter little loves in the shadow of the trees :
'Nozza, 'Nozza is tripping in the leas,
And the red rose blooms in the month of May.
Hola, Mazzinghi ! Bruscabocca ! Speak !
What is the time of day at Rome ?

Mazzinghi. That hour
When the bottegas bask beneath the Pope,
When gold is free as sunlight, and the arts
Bloom like a garden.

Cei. And Cardinals' courtezans
Smirk to you from the convent walls in paint
Bright as a bed of cloves, as if to say :
" Ecco, mio caro ! Am I not Mother of Christ ?
How do I look the part ? "

Cini. Shame, 'Cecco, shame !

Cei. Why not, I say ?

Dolfo. Why not ?

Cei. Oh pious Cini !
Art of the clothiers' guild who cut out frocks ?
And dost thou fear the frocks will cut thee out ?
Sweet maids have pity on our pious loves !

Dolfo. Your monk may buss his misses ; that is well.

Mazzinghi. Why not ?

Dolfo. Why not ?

Cei. Why not ? Drink life like wine :
Gulp it not down like physic. As for the rest,
Look well your part and you shall act it well :
The dress inspires the play : your actor knows it,
And shall not Rome, our Holy Mother Church ?

Mazzinghi. Where's the philosopher ?

Cei. What, our Lapo ?

Mazzinghi. So !

Cei. Come, let us seek him!

Links his arm in Mazzinghi's, and leads him to a dark corner beneath an arch.

Mazzinghi. Whither now, friend 'Cecco?

Cei. To Lapo's lair. Behold!

Mazzinghi. I see a cobweb.

Cei. And I a ducal court. Lapo is close,—

Pointing to the cobweb

Lapo, the glib, the dexterous tarantella;

This causeway is his staircase. Up above

He closets with the Pazzi. Let him swing.

Are you a fly? Too soon he scurries down:

A wasp? He hides: your venom does not find him.

Mazzinghi [eyeing him curiously and speaking with significance]

Friend 'Cecco, have you read the newest Plato?

Cei. Philosophy be damned. I love my neck:

Aye, by the Mass, I hug it like a girl's.

Dolfo. Gnat-fe! I smell a plot. I'd like to know

What's in this fine philosophy of Lapo.

Cei. The devil take philosophy, I say.

A wisp of song is worth a wain of Plato.

Struts off with Dolfo and Mazzinghi, singing:

Lips demure of the damsel say,

"Safe are the woods: come, walk this way!"

The roses blush, for the young men lie

In wait for the wench: "A kiss!" they cry,—

"A kiss on the mouth in the month of May!"

Exeunt. Re-enter Monna Livia and Laodamia.

Laodamia. But Aunt, he is a scholar.

Livia. Pooh! A scholar!

Laod. And are not such esteemed as counts and princes?

Do they not enter a city with their spoils,

Like conquerors in a triumph?

Livia. Poggio,—yes :
 He is a great man : nay, it is very well known
 Poggio will be immortal when your Dante,
 Aye and Boccaccio, and his naughty tales
 (Which, mind, I never catch you with again !)
 Are perished and forgotten : though I own
 Boccaccio's " Ancient Deities " may live,
 Being writ in Latin : but—your Savonarola !
 Ragazza, you are a fool.

Laodamia. At least, dear Aunt,
 Others are baselier born.

Livia. You speak of Lapo :
 Lapo has power, they say.

Laodamia. Bah ! 'Tis a poltroon !

Livia. Indeed, but he has writ a book.

Laodamia. Ah, true :
 And has the power to fling the silly book
 At Girolamo's head. I think he will not :
 He is too much afraid.

Livia [not heeding her] Philosophy,
 They say : and what they find in it I know not :
 But since he wrote it, folk do well, I hear,
 To give him twenty soldi to his lira.

Laodamia. O well, though Lapo write a hundred books,
 I'll hate him ; and until my lord forbids,
 I'll speak with Girolamo all the same.
 And Aunt——

Livia. You heard of poor Cannelto ?

Laodamia. No.

Livia. Last night they found him dead in Calle Cane,
 Stabbed in six places.

Laodamia. Horrible ! But 'tis said
 He was a wretch,—a Medicean spy.
 Oh yes, I get to know much politics.

Livia. [*continuing*] Also the same Cannelto, so
Was six times named in Messer Lapo's book

Laodamia. [*alarmed*] Aunt, is it true?

Livia. [*disregarding her*] And when just now you
With Girolamo, Lapo looked and muttered
To one beside him— [*Fra Mariano pa.*
There goes the Padre!

Laodamia. What did he say?

• *Livia.* [*with sudden unconcern*] I forget. Some
Greek,

I know not what. His mouth smiled
eyes. . . .

• Sit, child. Wait for me, while I stop the
He'll tell us how he liked the automaton—

*Monna Livia runs off, leaving Laodamia
the nook, beneath the arch. La
greeting Mazzinghi, to whom he be*

• *Lapo.* Welcome. [*Aside*] And how goes Rom
Mazzinghi.

Good news, from
“De Volentiâ ac Potentiâ” is the vogue.
The Passions stir the Powers, and Plato

Dolfo, Cei, Gini and Alberi

Lapo. Ebbene! Drink my health, and viva Pl
Thus Aristotle founders.

Dolfo. [*pointing to the book*] What is this?

Gnaf-fé! Let's have your fine philoso

Lapo. Sirs, I expound. De Volentiâ ac Poter
Concerning wills and weapons, powers an
Behold one law of life is everywhere:
Power to the potent: let him rule who c
Power is the quest of all: but how to wi
Even as your varlet, kneeling to your ma
Becomes her master; as the holy father,
Servant of servants, is the lord of all;

As, corn in hand, a coliar round his neck,
Your groom goes forth to catch his mare : even so,
De Volentiâ ac Potentiâ, note the rule :
You ride the Passions and you win the Power.
Amico mio, if in the joke of life

You'd have the laugh your way, then learn this rule.

Dolfo. Riding's the game ? Then I'm your jockey, Lapo.
Will't carry us back to Florence ? Say you that ?
Will't spill the Medici—that drug—that vomit ?

Lapo. Soft, Dolfo, soft. I am no politician.
Philosophy is the mistress of my heart.

Enter an Usher. He addresses Lapo.

Usher. Signor, my lord de' Pazzi bade me say
He would be honoured by a word with you.

Lapo. Sir, at your service.

Dolfo. Gnat-fé ! I'll not be fuddled.
What's in the wind ?

Lapo. Nay Dolfo, teach me sword-play ;
Then will I teach you all philosophy.
Addio amico mio. *Exit Lapo.*

Dolfo. Fellows, what said I ?
Are there not plots a-brewing ? Grrr ! You smell 'em.
Your Lapo twist my nozzle ? No, not he.
I'm dull at books, but, Gnat-fé ! I've a nose.
Lapo's a great man, mark you that, my fellows ;
Lapo can brew : he cannot pour the wine,—
Ha, ha ! He cannot pour the wine.

Cei. No, Dolfo,
There you come in : he cannot pour the wine.

Dolfo. I'd like to know what's in this book of Lapo.

Cini. Here is a tale, and this may give a clue.
When Lapo and I were lads, and pears were sweet,
Over the wall I'd go, hoist on his back,

And toss the fruit, and take my half in guerdon.
 But if by chance they caught me, Zeus! no halving.
 My portion was the stick, Lapo's the fruit.
 Ecco! The wretch was strolling in the lane;
 The pears were hid; he pored upon a book:
 The virtuous history of the good young Cyrus!
 He ever had a smooth and guileless mien,

"And ever, as now, philosophy was his mistress.
Cei. Lapo to the life. Signors, perpend, deduce;
 He hoists the Pazzi o'er the walls of Florence,
 And what they grab he pockets: if they fail,
 Look for him strolling in the lanes of Venice.

Dolfo. Who says old Dolfo cannot smell a plot?
 Your Lapo twist my nozzle? No, not he!

Cei. Come, let us scour for crumbs.

Cini. Forsooth not I. *[Exit.]*

Cei. *[Struts off with Dolfo singing]*

Shadow and gloom, and the pine woods grey:
 "Come, oh Love!" and the lips say Nay!
 "Come!" and the leaves and the lovers sigh,
 And vow the love that will never never die,
 Will never never die in the month of May!

Mazzinghi and Alberti withdraw beneath the arch.

Laodamia is hidden in a recess.

Alberti. You have a copy?

Mazzinghi. Here: this nook is quiet.

"Amico, have you read the newest Plato?"

That is our pass-word; and you answer "Yes,
 And as to βούλησις it likes me greatly."

Now for the book: *[he produces it]* this is philosophy.

Letters the Medici intercept, not books;

So we communicate. The text is Plato.

Lapo writes commentary; we construe

In cipher, and in cipher we reply ;
 In brief, the book is organ of our plot.
 Thus: [*pointing*] "Aristotle,"—Venice; "Plato,"—
 Rome ;
 "De Potentiâ,"—the Pope ; "Volentiâ,"—his son,
 Whom as the price of papal aid we name
 First Duke of Florence.

Alberti. Santiddio ! what now ?

Mazzinghi. You are startled. 'Tis the Pazzi's plot, •
 remember :

Success is certain : Lapo spins the web.
 The damned Medici will be stabbed in church ;
 Pazzi will rule ; the exiles all return ;
 For us high office.

Alberti. Certes : but the price !

Our City's Freedom !

Mazzinghi. That is lost already : •
 The Medici crushed it with their golden heel.
 Besides, the Pope is old ; soon he will die ;
 Then shall we kick the ladder down we climbed with.

Alberti. A duke's a duke. Our faith is pledged withal.

Mazzinghi. Faith is a horse you nourish while it trots :
 After, 'tis carrion.

Alberti. Aye, and dead, it stinks.

Mazzinghi. Prithee ? You are not with us ?

Alberti. I'll think on it.

Mazzinghi. Be warned. You hold a secret. You are
 • watched.

Alberti. Trust me with that, my friend. A common hatred
 For those who wronged us grapples us together.

Mazzinghi. Be warned, I say ; or else. . . . See here,
 • page twelve :—

"Shortly we treat of Ser Cannelto's lapse
 Upon the point of εἶδος versus ἰδέα."

Yesterday Lapo wrote this, and to-night
Cannetto met his death in Calle Cane.

Alberto. Santiddio !

Mazzinghi. Beware ! This youth, this Lapo,
Hath a keen logic of his own. His points
Flash on you, forged in steel, round some street corner :
The rest you argue in another world.

*Exeunt. Monna Livia with Fra Mariano is about
to rejoin Laodamia, who springs up suddenly
from her retreat near the speakers, and accosts
her aunt wildly.*

Laodamia. Instantly, aunt ! Say, what were Lapo's words,
Seeing me with Girolamo.

Livia. Cieli, child !
What is amiss ? I think you have seen a ghost.
Why, Padre, blessed Santa Caterina
Broken on the wheel was not so pale as she !

Laodamia. Tell me his words.

Livia. Ah, how you flurry me !
'Twas only a bookish quarrel. But Cannetto :
Ah, that was very sad. Padre, you heard ?
Killed in the street !

Mariano. Indeed ! But trust me, ladies,
A bookish quarrel is no bagatelle.
If αἰδώς or if ἰδέα hold the field, -
Aristotle, scilicet, or Plato, - seems
To us who are learned men, of more account
Than whether Rome is held by Turk or Pope.

Livia. Faith ! Now you put me in mind of Lapo's
words :

“ Shortly we treat of Savonarola's lapse
Upon the point of αἰδώς versus ἰδέα.”
Did I not say 'twas only a bookish quarrel ?
Those were the very words that Lapo uttered :

He looked at one he spoke with, and the youth
Grinned . . . Why, Laodamia, see ! your father !

*Laodamia runs impetuously to Roberto Strozzi,
clasp ing her hands.*

Laodamia. O father ! father ! Save our Girolamo !

Strozzi. Girolamo ? What, your playmate Savonarola,
Son of the Duke's physician ? . . . Ah, he is
grown. . . .

What then ?

Laodamia. They'll kill him ! Once he is out of sight,
Too late ! . . . They'll bring him on a bier, his
face

Covered, —so white ! —his breast all bleeding ; then
They'll say it was a quarrel ; no ! 'twas murder !

Ah, Girolamo, they will murder you !

Strozzi. Quarrels ? He has none : 'tis your fancy, child.

Laodamia. No : it is true ! Oh let us fly this hour !

To Urbino, —Padua, —Venice ! Bid him come :

You he obeys.

Strozzi. You hurl your words, my daughter :
Where will your passions blow you,—aye, and
others ?

Nay, do not pout : I know you true and constant.

But as for me, the only road I travel

Is — back to Florence, or to an exile's grave.

That would you hasten ?

Laodamia. Dearest father, no :

But—Girolamo !

Strozzi. Idle chatter ! Fear not :

Or, if you will, then warn him.

Laodamia. He would smile :

“ God will protect me,” he would say. No, no !

• *Strozzi.* Then warn his kindred.

Laodamia. Ah me ! There is no time !

SAVONAROLA

Strozzi. Softly, my daughter! There is one may help—
The Pazzi's intimate: indeed, 'tis they

Who urge the suit; what better counsellors?
You hear me? You will please me?

Laodamia. [*Distractedly*] I?— Oh my God!—
Flight is impossible; or, did we flee,

Are there not lanes and daggers everywhere?

Strozzi. See: I have thought of you alone. No rank,
No wrinkled money bag: the youth is brisk,

Handsome, his praises on the lips of all.
Not but that mating with the Strozzi lifts him:

Yet what of that? Our honours sit at peril,
Turning on Fortune's wheel: brain only rights them:
So say the Pazzi, shrewd and trusty friends.

Laodamia. Even as we quit the place the deed is done.
Alas! I am lost. There is no other way.

Strozzi. Lost? Wait until you see. One fault he has:
One only: scholar he is not: ha ha!

I have seen his book: 'tis velvet aegri somnia:
Wild as a sick man's dream. But let that pass.
Here is the man to save us, say the Pazzi.

Do I not make you happy?

Laodamia. [*Still musing*] Happiness?

He said we must not seek it. Life for him,
If I could give it, and in giving be

The unacknowledged partner of his triumphs. . .
There is nought else.

Enter Savonarola.

Strozzi.

My daughter seeks it.

A word with you, young sir:
Exit Strozzi

Savonarola.

Laodamia.

I did not call you.

Not now:

Savonarola. So! He signifies
 Consent: thereto Heaven urges him; for God
 God, who has made my soul a lonely harp
 Hung in a windy place, where all the woes
 Of Italy blow through and wail upon it,—
 God watted you, a White Bird, from His throne;
 And, oh Laodamia, as in a dream,
 I heard the seraphs of the City of God
 Pealing their campanili, and crying aloud,
 "Go forth, oh Savonarola: save the world!"
 Sanctum fecit me, et elegit ex omni carne.
 This consecration is upon me; God
 Gives thee to me as pledge.

Laodamia. Ah, Girolamo, no!

You misconceive my lord: it cannot be.

Savonarola. It is the will of Heaven. Ah! what is that!
*A sudden clanking of chains is distinctly audible
 from below; then a long cry of extreme
 anguish. They pause and listen. From the
 rear, 'Cacci Caci' is heard singing.*

Caci. Hail to the merry, merry month of May!
 Flutter little linnets in the wild-wood spray,
 Titter little loves in the shadow of the trees:
 'Nozza, 'Nozza is tripping in the lea,
 And the red rose blooms in the month of May.

Laodamia. Girolamo! what was it?

Savonarola. [*Groaning*] No May! no roses!
 The only flower that bourgeons there has bloomed
 Death! Death!

Laodamia. Girolamo!

Savonarola. [*Pointing excitedly to the distant revellers*]

Here they jig, they grab,
 They clatter the wine-cups and majolica:

Down there the fetters clank,—rust eats their
flesh,—

Black darkness aches for ever. Oh, these eyes
Strained for a glimmer! None: the dungeon reek
Swam up until I swooned. And then that voice:
“Father! Oh Father! Can you not feel my
arm?”

So! He was dying then; and now he is dead.

Laodamia, it might have been your father:

“Can you not feel my arm?” “Feel,” she said,—
“feel”!

“Withered,” a deep voice groaned: I heard no
more.

Withered, her arm—once soft and round, like yours.
Her heart is withered now.

Laodamia. I cannot bear it!

Savonarola. That sweet voice was the soul of Italy:

Out of the dark she called to me, and I

Heard, and that withered arm will I restore.

Your love. . . .

Laodamia. It cannot be—it cannot!

Savonarola. Hear me!

I swear it by that glory of your eyes:

This arm may God and the Virgin wither up,

If in this shamble of Christ’s innocent lambs

I strike no blow, and break no penthouse bars,

Nor cleave a straight path through their crookedness.

This is my vow: to you the oath is sworn.

Laodamia: Yes: but now quit me! Ah, for love o’
the Virgin

Quit me: we are watched.

Savonarola. God watches. I will hear

His mandate through your lips.

Laodamia. There’s danger.

Savonarola. Danger ?

Have I not drunk God's pledge cup from your eyes ?

Laodamia. Oh, if you would but heed me !—Promise this :

Until I bid, you will not leave this place.

Savonarola. That, certes, I will promise.

Laodamia. Quit me now ;
And do not hope. You read my father wrongly :
The thing you wish can never be. Alas,
I fear it cannot.

Lapo approaches, bearing fruit.

Savonarola. But it shall. God wills it.

Lapo. Ah, Messer Girolamo, I intrude.

Savonarola looks to Laodamia to reply.

Laodamia. [to *Lapo*] No, signor.

Lapo. Prithee, a melon, signorina ?

Laodamia. I thank you.

Savonarola. Do not take it.

Laodamia. Yes, indeed :

Would Messer Savonarola have me thirst ?

Savonarola. Last night I dreamt a dream. You took a melon,
Outside all gold, inside a reek of poisons !
And woe befell you.

Laodamia. It was not Messer Lapo's.

This one is good. I thank you, Messer Lapo.

Lapo. The signorina does me honour.

[To *Savonarola*] Pardon !

• I leave you. •

Laodamia. No, I pray you do not go.

Savonarola. Heaven save you, signorina. Fare you well.

*Laodamia watches Lapo, and seeing his face
is turned, looks anxiously and tenderly at
Savonarola.*

Laodamia. Your promise.

Savonarola. Yes : I do not leave the castle.
Seeing that he is about to go, Lapo turns affably to Savonarola.

Lapo. Ah, Signor Girolamo, it seems to me
 A thousand years until we talk again.
 We are both simple men : philosophy
 Is mistress of our hearts.

*Savonarola bows stiffly, Lapo with great politeness.
 Exit Savonarola.*

Laodamia. He's your friend ?
 You talk with him ? Ah, false !

Lapo, Shall I recall him ?
 He will assure you.

Laodamia. Indeed, and if it be so,
 It is a ruse : you plot ; you kill.

Lapo. More dreams
 Of Messer Savonarola ?

Laodamia. He does not know :
 But I—I know : you cannot hide it from me.

Lapo. Think you there's aught that I would hide from
 you ?

To you my soul is bare,—bathed in that love
 Which by your father's leave I name ; and though
 It is but a poor philosopher who pleads,
 And one it seems whom calumny defames,
 Bellissima, he shall conquer, and my lord
 Shall lay your hand in mine.

Laodamia. My father knows not :
 He knows you not. I know. He will not force me.
 Go : get you gone. Ser Lapo, I refuse you.
 Go wash your hand of blood before again
 You offer it to a daughter of the Strozzi.

Lapo. Ah, what is this ? I pray you, signorina !
 I am an innocent man. I shed no blood :

Let him come forth who dares accuse me.—I
Do harm to no man.

Laodamia. Yes; you write a book;
You feign philosophy: your written words
Are cut-throats masked!

Lapo. Before the saints I swear,
Nought that God made these hands have ever
slain.

Laodamia. Your hands, no, that needs courage; but your
book—

Lapo. I pray you tell me: it is my book, you say?
How shall it harm a soul? A humble effort:
Your father's learning I do not pretend.
Howbeit, though young, I lack not my disciples:
They will defend me.

Laodamia. "Disciples" do you call them?—
Hirelings, assassins!

Lapo. The great Lord Pazzi
Is one of them.

Laodamia. Your dupe! . . . Some words of Greek—
That is the sign they know.

Lapo. Prithee . . . I ponder . . .
I was but thinking how it comes about—
This fancy of yours . . . yes, now I have a clue.
Somewhat I wrote, by chance, of one Cannetto
Yes, that is so—I make no doubt it is . . .
Was thought to have urged the zeal of my disciples,
And caused his death,—an error;—but suppose it:
Then does it follow, if last night I wrote
Some innocent words—

Laodamia. Last night! 'Tis done already!
Leaving this place he runs upon his doom!
He shall not go: I'll warn the Duke—

Lapo. He is absent

Laodamia. My lord de Pazzi, Montesecco—all—
I will warn them all.

Lapo. What then? You fear a plot?
Suppose it. Then these signors are involved.
Ah, signorina, plots are stealthy vessels;
All's with the watchman when you steer by night.

Laodamia. So! he confesses!

Lapo. Nay: but if it were so,
And one were tainted of treason.

Laodamia. False!

Lapo. No matter:
If I denounced him—I, the watch (suppose it):
What will these signors do? Discard my warning?
No; but as lords they'll hearken to a lady,—
Bow, and protest her friend shall go unharmed:
As statesmen—shrug, and move him from their path.

Laodamia. Yes, yes! My God!

Lapo. With just this difference:
Pray follow me: for this you needs must know:
Your protest inculcates your father: him
Also they will remove.

Laodamia. Oh holy virgin,
Pity me! I am lost!

Lapo. Bellissima!
What would I not do for you?

Laodamia. You love me: save him!

Lapo. How save, and whom?

Laodamia. You know. Ah, why torment me?

Lapo. Nay, God forbid! Your phantasy is this:
I wrote some controversial words, which whet
The zeal of my disciples: deem you so?

Laodamia. Yes, if you will. . . . My God, we are in the
net!

Lapo. Praise from your lips is sweet; and praise it is

To deem that I, a poor philosopher,
 Can, with a pen stroke, prick out human lives,
 Or succour them so lightly. Then indeed,
 Although my chariot makes but little sound,
 Foes are as offal crushed beneath the wheels.
 Also, sweet lady, my love for you is fierce :
 I hope your friend is not a foe to that :
 You mark me, signorina ?—I humbly hope it.

Laodamia. Love without pity, so my father says,
 Is dross without the gold, flame without light,—
 A pest, a noisome thing.

Lapo. Ah, now you speak it,
 I do recall. There were indeed some words
 I wrote last night of Messer Savonarola,
 A youth of parts, if humbly I may say it,
 Though like to shipwreck in the fog of dreams.
 Our metaphysics differ,—I regret it,—
 Our metaphysics differ, signorina.

Laodamia. Withdraw what you have written : ah, you can !
 See, I am kneeling to you. Save him !

Lapo. No :
 Whatever the cost, false doctrine must be slain :
 I owe allegiance to philosophy :
 She is my love : you leave to me no other.

Laodamia. Oh, you are ruthless, cruel !

Lapo. Bellissima !
 But if the pressure of a hand, not mine,
 A lingering look of love, and not for me,
 Inscribed those words of dire philosophy ?
 What then ? Who is the ruthless one—the cruel ?
 Lapo ? Ah, no : not he, but—

Laodamia. Signor, say :
 What can I do to save him ?

Lapo. Ah, most fair !

Have I not said? Philosophy is my love:

You leave to me no other.

Laodamia. I will not wed him—
I vow I will not wed him.

Lapo. That is well.
The Strozzi's vow I trust . . . My heart! my soul!
For you—for you alone—I would renounce
Even philosophy, and in love's sweet quarrel
Drown all these disputations. Say, sweet lady,
Can this thing be?

Laodamia. Oh Virgin, succour! . . . Yes,
Yes, I will wed you. . . . Spare him! . . . Only
that!

Lapo. Now by the Mass, I swear it.

Laodamia. Save him! Go!

Lapo. Yes, time is urgent.

Laodamia. ²
Kisses her hand and is about to go.
Else—

Lapo. Addio!

Laodamia. No stay!
You think me a child. I was. I am no longer.
Now, prithee, listen. My lord was wont to say
My moods were wayward as my loosened tresses.
Ah, Messer Lapo, now you knit, you knot them:
By the hair you hold me: tear it out,—I care not!
But singe a hair of his—be warned! They say
A woman's locks once turned to deadly reptiles.

Lapo. I take the risk. Be sure I lack not skill
To tame Medusa. . . . Basta! Let that be.
Summon your Messer Savonarola: hold him,
While, as his guardian angel, I prepare
To lead him home in safety. Have no fear.
You, by a look, a sign, a secret meeting,
Even now may slay him,—you and no one else.

For me, I wish him well ; but my disciples
 Are jealous of my honour : they avenge it,—
 Ah, swiftly ! Wherefore, would you spare his life
 Then merely kill his love ; and that, I judge,
 Will die not hardly ; he, forsooth, being made
 For heavenly, I for earthly nuptials. That
 In time you'll know, albeit now you hate me.
 Addio, bellissima ; I do your will. *Exit.*

Livia. [*who now approaches, having watched at a distance*]
 So ! it is settled. Faith, and one would think,
 To see your looks and his, a young man's love
 Will gobble gall like julep.

Lazdammia. Do not talk.
 Bid Girolamo hither.

Livia. Child ! What next ?

Lazdammia. Instantly, Aunt.

Livia. Pray, what will Lapo say ?

Lazdammia. He wills it.

Livia. Shame ! A Strozzi's daughter
 And chattering, hoyden-like, with popolani !
 If that is all, your father will dismiss him.
 In my day brides were modest.

Lazdammia. Call him, Aunt.

Livia. Oh, if you will. [*To Savonarola*] Ah, Messer
 Girolamo,

Lesson us pray : we pine to hear your wisdom ;
 Merely to talk with you, I tell my niece,
 Makes her illustrious. As for me, pray pardon.
 Poor Padre -- there he is again : so lonely ;
 Adored in Florence, no one knows him here.
 Indeed I must befriend him : pray you, pardon.

Chortleys. Exit.

Savonarola. A waking dream I had. This revel died :
 The plangent organ, and the sobbing viol

Changed to the splash of water, and the sea
 Bore many barques, and wanton crews therein,
 Men and bad women, blown on fickle winds,
 Unwitting of the tide that swept them down
 Swiftly toward sunken rocks. Whence eagerly
 I paced the shore and cried,—He mariners, come !
 Trust not your shallops to the gliding wave :
 Great is my galley—space is there for all,
 And lo afar the Islands of the Blest !
 And many joined the ship, whose prow was set
 Swerveless through flood and gale to where the
 pillars
 Of Hercules loom, and, therebeyond that Isle
 Whose King crowns all our travail with great joy
 In Loveliness fresh-found through endless time.
 Freely they rowed, and, bowing to their oars,
 Sang “ Viva Gesu, nostro re ” ; and lo
 From every star a saint leant out, and shone,
 And listened. . . . O my beacon-star, but you
 Lean not, nor listen. All my dream is told
 To a wild dream in your eyes . . .

Laodamia. Oh for some words !

Think, Messer Girolamo, I—

Savonarola. Not “ Messer ” :

You have not called me so.

Laodamia. We have been too free—

Not mindful of the debt we owe our kindred.

Savonarola. Our kindred—yes, our Father, and His Son,
 Who in the shadowy vastness of the night
 Buildd the Heavens, where congregate the stars,
 In brotherhood ; and from the lowly stall
 Foreshowed on Earth that home where all are kin :
 Laodamia, yes ; let us be mindful
 Of debts we owe our kindred . . . Ah, so pale ?

You with the angel's wisdom,—I instruct you?
 Nay, let me kneel to you, and see Heaven open
 Out of the flashing of your dusky eyes.

Laodamia. No, for I am not good, like you.

Savonarola. Not good?

There is none good or evil, but as sap
 Is drawn up by the blossoms from the earth,
 So we draw life from God; and you the most,
 Whose flower is fairest. . . . Sweet, and so I
 dreamt

There, in my galleon, was a vacant seat,
 Abaft, and, from the hovering aureole,
 I knew it for my pilot's. . . . Still so cold?
 No eyes aglow, as once, to kindle mine,—
 What change is this? . . . *Laodamia*, speak!

Laodamia. Help me to say it, saints! I would not hurt
 you:

O pray interpret for me, signor! 'Tis
 Of love you speak. Remember, I am a Strozzi.

Savonarola. You mean our ranks are not alike: you mean
 This brag of lineage, and the devil's dower
 Of gold divides us. No, *Laodamia*,
 It sunders not us two.

Laodamia [*breathlessly*] Yes-- that I mean:
 Scorn me! For his sake who is more to me
 Than life, I bear it.

Savonarola. Ah! [*A pause*]

Laodamia [*faintly*] Forgive!

Savonarola. You falter;

You droop your eyes. Now look on me. You
 dare not.

Who is this other?

[*She clasps her hands and is silent*]
 By all the hours we passed,

Soul bared to soul, nourishing noble aims
 As with the life-blood of each other's love,
 I claim the right of knowledge.

Laodamia.

Oh, forgive!

Girolamo, I am betrothed!—Think kindly of me:
 I cannot speak. . Oh! . . .

Savonarola [*fiercely*]

God! And what is this?

And so they say that Satan, when he fell,
 Bore masks of angels' faces out of Heaven,
 And, to make devils of the sons of man,
 Clapped them upon the wantons!

*He paces the floor in agitation; then, pausing,
 looks at her again. The strumming of a lute
 is heard in the rear.*

False? No, no!

This riddle has a key; or else. . . . My God!

Enter Cei with Dolfo. They encounter Cini.

Cei. Sciaurato—halt! Art drunk? What, no?
 For shame.

Dolfo, and I, Mazzinghi—all the saints
 Are drunk this half hour. Pretty 'Nozza
 laughs—

Ha! the white lotus! How her bosom swells!

Mam, mam, mam!

She will ogle any lamb,
 Any grey, any green agnel-lo,
 Any clown, any punchinel-lo,

Be it coram, be it clam,—

Oh the pretty devil's dam!—

If his horns are tipped with yel-low.

Savonarola. Ah!

Cei [*to Cini*] Thanks to the holy apostle Lapo,

This lamb bleeds ducats [*clinking the coins in his wallet*]

Bah! Thou greenhorn, scour!
I am thy pimp, thy marigold.

Enter Lapo

God shield thee, Lapo!

Thou art a saint.

Cei reels off with Delfo, bowing grotesquely to Lapo. Cim with them. Lapo bows to Laodamia.

Lapo. Bellissima, all is well.

[*To Savonarola*] Messer, by your leave—your company,
I pray.

My road lies toward your home, but through a
byway

Quiet for converse.

Savonarola. Mine to a convent leads. . .

Farewell, Laodamia. God will pardon,—

And why not I? . . Farewell . . I suffocate!

Pure air and peace, and one straight path to walk
in. . .

[*To Lapo*] Signor, I come.

Exit with Lapo.

Laodamia [wildly] "God pardon?" Where is God? . . .

He—he is gone!—I think there is no God!

ACT II.

•
J. MANY YEARS LATER.

SCENE I.—*Pisa: A Street; in front of the Palazzo Strozzi*

Enter two Citizens.

1st Citizen. Besmeared with honey and stung to death
with wasps,—

Such, Messer, is the state of Pisa since

This vast French army quartered in the town.

2nd Citizen. Yet if they free us from the yoke
Florence,

We'll suffer all, and gladly.

1st Cit. Know ye the news?

2nd Cit. That yesterday young Piero, Prince of Florer
Lest France might take his city, promised ours
In gift, and with it ten score thousand florins.

1st Cit. True, but to-day a monk of mighty visage
Entered our city riding on an ass,
Spokesman for Florence in the Prince's stead,
Whose bargain he makes bold to tear in pieces
And if he bend the French king to his will,
Like Holy Christ they say he'll ride to Florenc
With palms to strew his way.

2nd Cit. Now, by the Ma:
Kings are tough metal for a monk to bend.

1st Cit. Natheless, of this same Frate tales are curr

A CITY'S TRAGEDY

31

That augur strangely. He it was foretold
The French king's coming as a second Cyrus
To purge the sins of Rome.

[illegible]

1st Cit. More gold to sack, pardee :
 'The shortest way to purge a city's sins.
 Wherefore 'tis feared the king may take the
 bait ;
 'The more that, like his sire, King Louis, Charles
 Is superstitious, and the monk works marvels.

2nd Qst. What is his name?

1st Cit. Savonarola, but
The people style him Frate, as in love.

2nd Cit. Savonarola? Strange! Some ten years since,

Lodging with one called Lapo in Ferrara,
I met a youth so named whom Lapo knew;
And there is one interprets for the French
Has this same Lapo's very pitch and parlance,
Though little to recall his countenance.
But Lapo perished in the Pazzi plot
Unless belike he saved his lissom neck,
Selling his friends. Know ye the man I speak
of?

Wears a Venetian doublet.

1st Cat. Supple gait?
Walks safe amid a guard of halberdiers?

2nd Cat. The same. He caters for the Frenchmen's rapine :

Is there a burgher owns a black-eyed daughter,
 Five cellars, parchments, gold or plate or pictures,
 Lo, Sir Venetian Doublet, chalk in hand,
 Scores on the door a coat of arms—and straight

A French lord billets there, and clears the treasure !
 . . . So ho ! And here he comes !

Enter Lapo, clad shabbily, altered in appearance, and wearing a beard. With him is a guard of French halberdiers. They pause before the door of the Palazzo Strozzi, and Lapo draws a fleur-de-lys upon the lintel.

1st Cit. The fleur-de-lys !

2nd Cit. He marks the Strozzi Palace for King Charles of France.

1st Cit. Gold—books—fair daughter—he serves his client well :

No house yields richer plunder than the Strozzi's.

2nd Cit. Lapo, by the Mass ! I swear it is the man !

SCENE II.—*The Strozzi Palace : within. A Library. Ent Lapo with French halberdiers. The door is flung open angrily by a porter of the palace, who encounters Lapo without at first seeing his companions.*

Porter. Knave, wouldst thou pass a Strozzi's gate unbi
Seizes him by the thro

Lapo. Loose me ! I am French !

Porter. We'll teach thee Pisan manne
The soldiers interpose : the porter steps back surveys them.

Plague on the sorry hound : he leads an army !

Bowing to Lapo ironically

Sir King of France, I yield : the battle is yours

Your first great victory ! Viva l'oriflamme !

Halberdiers. Vive l'oriflamme ! Hurrah !

Lapo. Sir, you speak t

For, since they crossed the Alps, the French have
 Nought of the Italians but some flying heels.

Porter. [*Looking at the boots of the French soldiers, & peeped from those of their misshapen legs.*]

Humph! and that's better than a Frenchman's toes.

Laps. [*With an flourish, examines the apartment.*]

What seek ye? Wine? or victuals? Here's the cellar:

Ye don't drink parchment, eh? 'Tis all ye'll get;

Hustling in here. . . . These are our friends, forsooth!

Laps. [*Turning to the porter.*]

Amico, I interpret for these Messieurs, being

A Pisan, though from Venice: as you see,

My hose is somewhat travelled

Porter. Bah! A Pisan!

Eating his words, 'tis so hungry! Don't tell me!

I know ye, fellow: a hanger on, a tramp:

They neither toil, nor spin, yet are not lilies.

Laps. Amico, nay, I am an honest man.

I toil, I spin.

Porter. Va! Like the spider, rascal:

He spins in the dirty corners, and a broom's

His medicine. Va!

Laps. [*Drawing out money.*] Meiser, the warps of Fate

Twist us to other than we are. You, friend,

Were born to rule as Castellan of Pisa!

Your stubborn worth deserves a fortress' keys:

But Fate has made you flunkey! So with me:

I, Sir, was born Philosopher: this brain [*tucking his forehead*]

Might rear that dandled puling babe, the world,

Out of its paps, its nursery tales, its godlings,

Into the cognizance of Power and Empire:

But, 'faith, it coos to its monks and mammies still,

And I must spin like other folk—well, no:

Hardly like others. . . . Basta ! To urgent matters !
 'These are from his most Christian Majesty
 'The King of France,—his bodyguard ; he comes
 For succour to the oppressed of Italy,
 As prophesied. A lady of the house, —
 If I mistake not, daughter of the Strozzi,---

Drops the money into the Porter's hand.

Your pardon,---is she maid or mistress ?

Porter.

Signors,

Be seated : you are gentles, as I see.

*A soldier offers him wine from a flask. He drinks
 and bows to the Frenchmen.*

Grazie ! Your health ! . . . You put a question,
 Sir :

As I may say, the riddle of the house.

Signora, Signorina, as you please :

Maiden though married, Nencia swears. She
 knows,

Being my lady's woman. But, say I,

Where is the husband ? Some say,—long since dead,
 Hanged with the Pazzi on the marriage day ;
 Some,— living, and she drove the bridegroom from
 her,

Forced to the bond, yet mighty free of spirit.

For sure enough her girdle hides a dagger

That once she called " her friend " ; though trust
 me, Sir, *

It is a gentle lady, sweet as jasmine ;

And many take her fragrance,—none may pluck her.

Lapo. [Aside]

Plucked, nathless, shall she be,—worn in the cap,—
 Tossed where they drop my ducats on the march ;

Or else—

[To an officer :]

Pucelle, mais mariée, comme je dis.

• Distes a sa majesté que tout l'attend :
Il est bienvenu.

Officer. Ha ! par Saint Denys :
[*Sings*] Ci gist Margot, la gentil' damoiselle,
Qu'a deux maris, et encore est pucelle.
A bell rings without.

Porter. It is my lady. Hide !
*Draws an arras : a small private chapel is disclosed.
Lap and the pillars conceal themselves. Enter
Robert Strozzi and his daughter Lardama.*

Lardama. [*Lifts a gauntlet, left on the table*]

Tommaso ! What is this ?

Porter. The French, Signora.
They asked for my lord and bade me say then King
"Honours the Signor Strozzi with a visit" :
That was the message :

Lardama. Father, see - your books !
Hide them, Tommaso : help me : quick, I pray
you.

Strozzi. [*Pacing the room in agitation, while the books are
removed from the shelves and piled on the table*]

The mongrel monarch,--the mouthing ricknapes !

(Softly ! That tome is worth a prince's ransom.)

Honours us, does he ? Lucifer filches souls ;

A book's a soul's quintessence : thieves of books

Out-devil devils ! Let him dare it !

Clutches his fist toward the door.

Voic. [*From without*] Way
For his most Christian Majesty, King Charles.

*Enter Charles VIII., attended only by Guillaume Breznet.
• He bows to Strozzi and Lardama, who kneel.*

• *Charles.* Signor, I greet you. Rise, ma belle Italienne :
And you, my lord ; thanks for your welcome. Sit.

A goodly house ! Et qu'elle est belle Madonra !

The Signor is pleased to make this place our hostel ?

Strozzi. All the king asks in honour, that we yield.

Charles. What is this learned litter ? Madonna reads ?

Luodamia. No sire ; my father's pastime, else, i' faith,

Looks significantly at her father.

Would I not burn them, such the dust they make !

Charles [*patting her familiarly on the cheek*] Ah, wicked !

Strozzi. Aye, an old man's bagatelles :

Tommaso, clear the board ; his Majesty

Needs entertainment.

Charles. No, by St Denys !

Let be : I feed on this.

Seizes Luodamia's hand and kisses it.

Briçonnet. Sire, it is said

The sheepskins of the Strozzi well might back

The Argo's golden fleece. Your Amboise Castle

Is poor in learned treasure.

Charles. Tut, good Guillaume !

Where is the man with eyes for sallow parchment

When lilies are afield ?

Puts his arm round her waist : she avails him.

Briçonnet. So ! Then this signor

May with one treasure ransom all the rest ?

Is it so, my liege ?

Strozzi. I pray you spare us insult.

Charles. Bah ! 'Tis a very Jew, this Briçonnet !

Madonna, thou shalt teach him : comme ça,—

comme ça !

Raps Briçonnet on the knuckles, laughing badly.

Va donc ! thou kestrel !—Thus he crooks his talons :

Ha, voila ! So !

*Leans over the table and claws the books toward
him with a ferocious grimace.*

But have no care, my lord :
 'Madonna's eyes are all the books I read.
 So fair, my lord, you bound this book of love,
 Amboise shall have no other.

Strazzi. [*Rising indignantly*] God in Heaven !
 Has the most Christian Maesty a blacker soul
 Than Turk, or vile Moresco ? Take all these, -
 Snatch all these gleanings of an old man's life.
 Yea, lift this latch and grasp a thousand realms.
 For this, O Nerxes, is no Hellespont,
 This bridge no flood engulfs : its piers are set
 Deep in immortal spirits ; underneath
 Wash the dark ages : thoughts with wingèd feet
 Flash o'er this bridge 'twixt antique times and ours,
 And light new highways for thy soul to tread.
 Nay, if you will, go subjugate all lands,
 From Lebanon to the Herculean Strait, --
 Hold them you shall not : realm on realm eludes
 you, --
 Slips from your grasp like sand thro' open fingers ;
 But these enlarge your frontiers by the leagues.
 Travelled by minds unnumbered, countless years, --
 A thousand volumes, each a kingdom won ;
 A thousand kingdoms of the soul of man ;
 A thousand realms to your one realm annexed : --
 Steal, if you will, all these, but not our honour !

Ladamma. Father, he dare not touch them, - no, nor me :
 I have a friend, - behold ! my bosom hides it :

Draws a small dagger from her breast.

Ere this it saved me, -- See ! I do not flinch !

Stabs her arm.

Strazzi. [*With alarm*] My daughter !

Charles. Ha ! You are pierced ! The fair white flesh !
 Mon dieu ! Does it not hurt ? Ho there, a leech ! -

Laodamia. [*Binding the wound*] No sire, no leech for me :
 but, if you will,
 Call one to heal my father's wounded pride,—
 Son of St Louis and of Charlemagne,
 Call from your breast the kingly chivalry :
 That is the potent leech. For me, my lord,
 I did but prove how little I should fear,
 Rather than take dishonour from your hands,
 To prick my heart, and brand upon your brow
 A shame no leech can heal.

Charles. Now, *pasques-dieu*, Guillaume !
 Here is a stalwart quean ! What shall we think ?
 'There is that tag of the army, that Omniscience,
 That draggled unctuous scullion, he who knows
 All things and tongues, all politics and persons,
 Save how to help himself,—yet helps himself
 'To all things : what shall we think, I say ?
 He comes from her,—he told us all about her :
 Aye, for the sight of her the other day
 So conquered us —

Briçonnet. And kings are worth the conquest,—
 So mark you that, Madonna.

Charles. He comes, I say,
 And brings us word from her, "The King is
 welcome."
 Now, *pasques-dieu*, Guillaume, what are we to
 think ?

Laodamia speaks earnestly aside with her father.

Enter an officer who speaks aside to Briçonnet.

Briçonnet. Think, sire ? Why, a pretty actress knows
 How coyness quickens passion. As for him,
 The old huddle's in his dotage. . . . Pray your pardon,
 New embassy from Florence—

Charles. Bah ! your Piero !

Is not that partridge plucked enough already?
 Pisa, Leghorn, Sarzana, Librefatta, -
 N'est ce pas assez? Four apples from one twig!
 ("Countess of Pisa," - hey, ma belle Italienne,
 How like you that for a title?) Piero! Ha!
 You know ~~que~~ Piero de Medici, Signor?
 Son of Lorenzo, and ruler now in Florence?

He is a poltroon. - Bid him enter, Guillaume.

Brignonet. Not Piero, by your leave. We plucked him,
 certes,

And Florence, I hear, is like to wring his neck:
 This time, a gamer cock: the prophet Jerome.

Charles. He who foretold my coming?

Brignonet. Aye, Sire—he,
 Prior of St Marks, and chief man now in Florence.
 The mob doff hats, and tiptoe for a glance.

Charles. Guillaume, I'd give my purse to see a prophet.

Brignonet. As for their prophecies, that stuff, my liege,
 They juggle from confessional, like the clown
 Your kerchief from a box.

Charles. Bal, fool, confess:
 Thou art a very knave in bud, - in flower
 A cardinal.

Brignonet. My liege, I hope to be.

Charles. Thou shalt. Thou art the greatest thief un-
 frocked,—
 A churchman born. . . .

[*To Strozzi*] Didst hear that prophecy?

Strozzi. The Frate's sermons ever made a stir:
 That more than most: indeed the people said,
 Preaching, a halo crowned him. Say, my daughter:
 What was the text?

Laodamia. "Gladius super terram
 Cito et velociter," father.

Charles.

Ah, madonna!

You know their Latin? . . . Guillaume, what does it mean?

Briçonnet. Swiftly and soon, upon the earth a sword.

Charles. Our sword, good Guillaume?

Briçonnet.

Aye.

Charles.

When said he that?

Strozzi. Say, child!

Laodamia. Was it not three years since, my father,
Before Lorenzo's death?

Strozzi.

Aye, that was it.

Charles.

Pasques-dieu! And whose con-

fessions taught him that?

Thou art an ass, Briçonnet. Three years since

Didst *thou* know we should march to Italy?

Briçonnet. No, Sire.

A noise without

Charles. Nor I. . . . Who clamours at the door?

Guillaume, go see.

Voice. [*Striking from without*] Not fire nor fiends shall
stop me!

Briçonnet opens the door, and the Greyfriar, Fra
Mariano, forces his way in, grappled from
behind by two soldiers. Briçonnet stamps,
and to the alarm of the Strozzi, the halberdiers
issue from the curtained chapel, and take their
places around the King for his protection.
Lafes remains in hiding. Fra Mariano,
puffed, blated, and purple with excitement,
throws himself at Charles's feet.

Charles. Up man! Thou grovellest. . . .

[*The Strozzi*] Is this the prophet?

Strozzi. Oñe Mariano, Sire.

Mariano. [*Rising pompously and with uplifted hands*]

Omnipotent Jove,

All holy saints, and tutelary stars,
Shake from the coma of Aldebaran
Conjunctive blessings on this regal head !

*Rolls his eyes about the room ridiculously and throws
himself into an attitude of deprecation.*

Charles. Guillaume, the man is drunk.

Marian. What folk are these ?

Worthy of thee, august and astral monarch ?

Bryennet. Thy business, fellow.

Marian. Behold a ravening wolf

Prowls in sheep's clothing : majesty, beware !

Charles. Ha, comme c'est drôle !

Bryennet. Truce of thy tropes : speak plainly.

Marian. Fra Girolamo, dire implacable foe

Of the holy father, our most pious Pope —

Charles. The prophet, Guillaume ?

Bryennet. Doubtless.

Charles. [*Aside*] That is well :—

We also are the Borgia's foe : eh, Guillaume ?

Marian. Cursed by genethiac omen from his birth,

Cub of black Saturn, cacotrophic, vile,

Konoclast, false prophet, blasphemous,

Raving his voice gradually to a howl.

Out of whose mouth there issues fire and stench,—

Apostate, here sarch, and demagogue,

Imp, fiend, abortion of the bottomless pit,

Satan incarnate

Stammers and grows incoherent with rage.

Charles. Pasque-dieu ! Comme c'est drôle !

*Drink is given to Marian, who smacks his lips ;
and, recovering, pauses, rolls his eyes about the
room, then resumes in the dramatic tone.*

Marian. Now, having proved the wickedness of this monk,
I pass to instances : as videlicet.

He is the foe of princes. Ludovic,
 The Lord of Milan, your ally, he baffled.
 Prince Bentivoglio from the sacred rostrum
 He put to shame, and but for Satan's aid
 [*crosses himself*] His life were forfeit.

Brignonet. [*To Strozzi*] Is this true, my lord?

Strozzi. My daughter, say.

Laodamia. The Duke employed assassins,
 Who shrank before the Frate's gaze, and fled.

Mariano. Quo cognoscimus ipsum adparuisse Satanam :
 Whereas he escaped by shewing the evil eye—

Starts back as if at sight of a reptile.

Alarum ! Let him be burnt for use of witchcraft !

Ha ! Do I err ? Canst prick a hole in that ?

No ? Then do justice. Apprehend him, Sire !

Raze out this blot upon our holy church !

Arise, St George, and trample on this dragon !

*Rolls his eyes about as if for approbation. Brignonet
 shrugs ; the King grins. With a gesticulation
 of vexation he proceeds.*

Tut ! There's no law nor justice in the land ! . . .

Lorenzo the Magnificent, moreover,

This impious Frate dared to reprobate,

Denying (opprobrious wretch !) that gracious prince

The Church's absolution for his sins :

And he a prince ! Lift, O thou son of Louis,

Lift, illustrissimo, thy hand and strike !

And when they warned this hydra from the city,

Insolently to the Prince he hissed these words :

" I stay : thou goest ! "

Charles. Et alors ?

Laodamia. The Prince

Perished unshriven.

Charles. Enough, good fellow,—go !

[*Aside*]

Cut-throats before him quail ; he prophesies ;
Works miracles, slaying princes with a word !—
Now, by our Lady, 'tis a dangerous monk !
We thank thee, father.

Mariano. [*Leftily waving his hands*] Sire, I eschew reward.
To save the King suffices. . . . Mightiest Jove,
All holy saints, and thou, Aldebaran—

Briçonnet. Out, sirrah ! *Fra Mariano is hustled out.*

Charles. Do you know this man, my lord ?

Strozzi. A rival preacher, once the vogue in Florence.

Charles. Does not the prophet loom more large and
terrible ?

Briçonnet. Aye, certes.

Charles. Shall we not have this prophet, then,
On our side, Guillaume ?

Briçonnet. Aye, Sire : while it serves us.

Charles. Pasques-dieu ! I would not miss the sight of
him,—

Not for a province, Guillaume ! Bid him enter.

*Briçonnet speaks to an officer. Other soldiers from
without crowd into the room to lend state to the
King. There is an expectant pause. Enter
Savonarola clad as a Blackfriar. The populace
press to the door to see him.*

Briçonnet. Father, your knees ! It is the King of France.

Savonarola. No, friend ; when on the errand of my King,
To Him alone I bow.

Charles. Aye, aye, good father !

Stand upon no punctilio. You are welcome.

We hear you work great miracles.

*Savonarola approaches the King and holds a crucifix
to his lips. The King falls on his knees and
kisses it*

Savonarola.

O King,

Bronze from the earth am I, wherethrough God
blows,

A trump to call his people to repentance.

Whereas the land of Italy is filled

From end to end with wickedness and lust,

Whereas Christ's Vicar, his sons and concubines

Sit clad in scarlet, and the dye is blood

Wrung from the flock he shepherds,— God has
spoken :

“ Swiftly and soon, a sword upon the earth !

My temples shall be purgèd and My house

Swept of the traffickers, who toss men's souls

Like dice upon My tables.”

Charles.

Ha, mon père,

You speak of the holy father. Say they truly,

Did not this Borgia buy the papal crown

With gold that broke the back of mules a-many ?

Savonarola. Aye, God beholds it, King !

Charles.

What said we, Guillaume ?

Also he has, by the year, for prisoning Djem,

Foe of the Empire of the Turk, a bribe

Of forty thousand ducats from the Soldan.

À bas ce Borgia ! 'Twas my father's right,

And mine !

Savonarola. [Terribly] Thou play the henchman to the
Turk ?

Charles. Pardon ! I spoke in haste.

Savonarola.

What dost thou, King ?

Art thou that Cyrus sent from God, and thou,—

Thou viest with that Iscariot, him who sits

In Peter's chair, and sells his Lord for silver,

And with the price gives banquers to his harlots ?

Charles. Absolve me, father.

Savonarola. Thou--what dost thou, King?

Thou art the Lord's anointed, and behold

Thou and thy men seduce, destroy and plunder.

Charles. Guillaume, command that all the army takes
Is purchased or restored.

Briçonnet. Sire! But our treasury--

Charles. Art thou the King, Briçonnet, or am I?

Savonarola. Djem shalt thou liberate.

Charles. I will, and gladly.

Savonarola. And punish Ludovic of Milan.

Briçonnet. Sire!

Savonarola. He wears the crown of Galeazzo, whom
He poisoned.

Briçonnet. Our sole ally,--remember that!

Savonarola. The God of Justice is your sole ally.

Briçonnet. He gives us gold and passage.

Savonarola. Beware, O Levite!

Out of the dark one cried to thee for aid:

"Succour me, stranger!"—"Orsù! Let him cry!

I stop for none!"—Thou fool, then go thy way:

He that cried out for succour was thy soul:

On, on thy body hurried to its grave,

Thy soul was left to perish.

Charles. Briçonnet,

Thou art the Levite: [*Is Savonarola*] not I, but he,
good father:

We pass not by; we succour Italy.

Savonarola. Know, furthermore, where the tyrant's
son,

Piero hath betrayed to thee the towns,

Pisa, Leghorn, Sarzana and Libretatta,

Fief of the city of Florence, these shalt thou

Hold as in trust to yield them back to Florence,

And swear it on the altar in our Dome.

Charles. That will I, father.

Briçonnet.

Sire !

Charles.

Silence, thou upstart !

Dost think that I, the King of France, must burn
Plunged into hell, lest thou shouldst singe thy
whiskers ?

Savonarola. Be as a guest in Florence, harming none ;
For in that town God's might is manifest.

Charles. Guillaume, we'll be that city's firm ally.

Savonarola. God is our sole ally : if He is thine,
Then shall the city be thy strength : for there
God bids me garrison with His angels, Truth,
Freedom and Justice, every living soul,
That, from the city's vantage ground, the earth
May yet be conquered for the King of Kings.
For lo, a great cry goes up unto Heaven :
How long, O Lord, how long ? By day and
night,

Cutthroats and panders stalk the streets of Rome,
Paid by thy priests. On every crime the Pope
Has set his signet : rapine, simony,
Incest and fraud : " Sin, O my sons," he saith :
" Sin, and buy pardon, and endow my sins."—
These things, O King, shalt thou avenge.

Charles.

So will I.

Savonarola. Yet injure not the Pope. As man he errs,
As Pope he cannot err. Or if as Pope
He errs, then Pope he is not. Call a Council.
Nothing in haste ; but hold the sword of God,
As in the dream that came to me from Heaven :
" S viftly and soon a sword upon the earth !
My temples shall be purgèd and My house,
Swept of the traffickers who toss men's souls
Like dice upon My altars."

Charles. [*Rising in excitement and drawing his sword*]

By St Louis,

This sword shall purge the church, and Rome and Naples !

Thence will we march to stay the lustful Turk !

A Labarum is the Oriflamme of France !

Officers and Soldiers. [*Rising and drawing their swords*] .

A Labarum is the Oriflamme of France !

Savonarola. [*After the clamour has subsided*]

Charles, ere thou slay the lustful Turk abroad,

Look in thy breast, and slay him there.

Charles.

Mon père ?

Savonarola. Wrong thou no woman, Charles.

Charles. [*With averted head*] So help me, Virgin !

Savonarola. If thou remember, God remembers thee :

If thou forget, then in thine hour of trouble,

Thou, too, shalt be forgotten. Farewell, King.

Charles. Thy blessing, Father !

Savonarola. Benedicat te et gladium tuum Omnipotens Deus,

Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus. Amen.

All.

Amen !

Savonarola kneels in prayer, as Charles rises and, bowing to Strozzi, silently files out with his retinue. Enter Valori eagerly. Savonarola rises.

Valori. Luck to us, Frate ! God has bared his arm !

The city has risen, the Medici flies to Venice :

“ The People ! The People ! Let the tyrants die ! ”

Sounds through the streets of Florence, and there withal

“ Evviva Cristo ! Evviva,—Evviva Frate ! ”

Thus all you prophesied has come to pass :

The republic is acclaimed : the City casts
To the winds its tyrants, and for King takes Christ.

He impetuously seizes Savonarola's hands.

Savonarola. Florence ! O Florence, City of the King,
Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;
Yea lift them up, ye everlasting doors :
And the King of Glory shall come in ! . . .
I also have news : the King will spare the city ;
Pisa, Leghorn, Sarzana, Librefatta,
He holds in trust, and vews it on the altar ;
His arms are pledged to fight our holy cause :
This I commanded in the name of God.

Valori. Frate, you have saved the city : it is yours :
You hold it in the hollow of your palm !

Savonarola. Aye ! as the Host to lay upon His altar !

Valori. An omen. As I rode, a hurricane blew,
And the last leaves of the Autumn filled the air :
Ghosts of the vanquished evil, legions spent,
Homeward we ride and trample them to earth ;
Then shall we plant the new tree Liberty.
Addio ! I bear the news. Heaven prosper thee !

Exit. Savonarola goes to the altar in the private chapel and kneels. Exit Strozzi. Laodamia remains. She draws near to him. He rises.

Laodamia. Father !

Savonarola. My daughter ?

Laodamia. You have saved us.

Savonarola. Thank

Not me, but Heaven. [*Suddenly recognising her*]

Matronna ; thou ?

Laodamia. You know me ?

Savonarola. So ! . . . And a great wind out of Heaven
blows back

The pages of our book of life, to gloss

Dark hours with bright, and point the hand of God!

Laodamia. Your eyes accuse me, father.

Savonarola.

No, my daughter:

The Master-Painter razed that picture out:

He turns the pages of a gospel and becomes absorbed.

Laodamia. Then I may speak. You thought me false;

I seemed so:

Oh, but methinks you might divine the cause.

Is it then false to buy the life you love

Paying your own?

Savonarola. [*Reading from a book and giving no heed to her*]

Qui sine peccato est, primus lapidem mittat:

He who is sinless, let him first cast the stone.

Laodamia. O Girolamo, I think you have not guessed!

Savonarola. You speak in riddles. Daughter, I must go.

Laodamia. Not yet! . . . Ah true: "He razed that picture out!"

We are as shapes that fill another canvas.

Savonarola. The ways of God are strange: since last we met

What deserts have I travelled! and this house,

Your husband's, is my Pisgah: Italy

Lies at my feet redeemed.

Laodamia.

I have no husband.

Savonarola. He of Ferrara,—does he live no more?

Laodamia. I do not know; I care not. If the Church

Call him my husband, it is false, I say.

My husband is a memory;—that dies not.

Savonarola. My daughter, it is not well that we discourse.

You have a kinsman with us at St Mark's:

Young Alessandro Strozzi, have you not?

Laodamia. Yes, father.

Savonarola.

From him I will enquire of you.

Florence expects me now : may God be with you.
Farewell.

Lazdamia. Stay ! Oh, you do not understand.
Father, I loved you all the while,—and him
I hated.

Savonarola. Ah ! . . . Not so you spoke of old.

Lazdamia. I spoke to kill your love : why not myself ?
'Tis dead ! I beat my brow upon its tomb !
Pitiless, pitiless love of Heaven ! Not hate
Is half as cruel !

Savonarola. No, my daughter, no !
Memories there are which, though we bury them
Fathoms beneath our lonely cells, rise up,
Smiling with sad wild faces on our change. . . .
Christ's love is better. I have said too much.
Oh, if you loved me and were lured away,
Daughter, His love consoles. In Him we yet
Are one. . . . Farewell !

Lazdamia. Have I not saved your life ?
You shall not go ! This hour at least is mine.
Ah ! you were dead that night. . . . To espouse
a Strozzi,—
That was his plot ; and you were on his path. . . .
I begged your life : the price was mine. I gave it.
Yes, but once you were safe, his blood had paid it :
For see ! This steel !

Draws the stiletto from her bosom.

Savonarola. [With horror] You killed him ?

Lazdamia. No : he fled.

Snakes are not lions : I have not seen him since.

Savonarola. Daughter, explain ! Why did you veil the
truth ?

Lazdamia. From you ? I must. My eyes, my lips, my
hands,

He tied them all,—a dagger at your breast.

One word had killed you,—even one glance of Love.

What could I do? What but destroy your Love?

O Girolamo, I loved you so! I loved you!

Now will you fling me from you, — kill me again, —

Stone me with pious saws and frigid pardons, —

Me who for your sake died so many times?

Savonarola. Alas, my daughter, what is this you tell me?

Laelia. I would not speak, but — On! I cannot bear it!

Savonarola. My best beloved! Laeliam! What have I done?

My God! My God! [*vehemently*] Go, daughter, leave me!

I beseech you, leave me!

Laelia. [*Tenderly*] Leave you, dear Girolamo?

Savonarola. [*With fierce vehemence*] Yes, yes! or pray!

Kneel so! [*Kneeling*]

Christ! Holy Virgin!

Look on us! Pity us! Send me thy temptation, —

Thine on the mount, all kingdoms of the world,

And all their glory, — tempt my heart with those;

Not this! Not this! . . . Oh, hast Thou brought me here,

Painfully, to this conquest, — me, O God,

Warring against the license of Thy Priests;

My foot upon this Pisgah: then to plunge

Headlong, the whole world slipping in my fall? . . .

Oh God, Thou knowest how dearly we have loved

‘Two souls in the world alone with Thee,’ we said:

Why might it never be, — my God, oh why? . . .

And now the hard gain of my years seems lost,

And she the only gain! . . . Oh, snatch me from her,

Take her, thou passionless Love, thou only Good,—
 Upon Thine everlasting arms we fall:
 Save her! Save me! Save Italy, oh God!

He rises, lifts her hand to his lips, then speaks hoarsely.

Christ keep you, daughter!

Laodamia.

Will you leave me so?

Savonarola. Do you not see the years heaped up between us?

And all the prayer that mounts up to this triumph?
 One slip, and then it topples! Oh my daughter,
 "Triumph" I call it: Florence now is mine,—
 Reclaimed for Christ,—soon Italy,—the world!
 But is it triumph?

I trod, I trampled all this arduous way
 Upon your aching heart. Forgive. Farewell.
 There is no more to say. *Exit.*

Laodamia. [Dazed] "No more!" "Farewell!"

She stands rigid. Lapo issues from behind the arras. She gives a cry of alarm, and then collects herself, facing him with courage, but without recognising him.

Lapo. [Bowing profoundly] Fear not, signora. I am no banditto.

Laodamia. Tommaso!

Lapo. Do not call: he does not hear.

Signora, I seek some private words with you.

Laodamia. What right have you to intrude? I know you not.

Lapo. [Aside] Clearly she does not. [To *Laodamia*] Love for him you spoke with,—

Love for the Frate makes us kin, signora.

Do not suspect me. There were reasons—Basta!

Let this suffice: I hid to save the Frate.

Laodamia. I think the Frate needs no aid from us.
 Withdraw, sir: and if indeed you are his friend,
 Do not report our meeting: though, be sure,
 I take no shame from it.

Lapo. Trust me, fair lady.
 My homage locks your secret here for ever.

Laughing his heart.

Laodamia. I think you speak sincerely.

Lapo. From my heart!

And now, signora, listen! The Frate needs
 No aid, you said. What of the words he spoke:
 "The sad wild faces," and, "the lonely cell"?
 You noticed that?

Laodamia. [*breathlessly*]: Yes, yes!

Lapo. The fasts, the vigils:
 No woman's care to save him.

Laodamia. God is with him.

Lapo. I hope so: God has given him much to bear,
 And little comfort. That his friends should see to.
 Which brings me to the purpose of my visit.
 Signora, when the white magnolia flower
 Bares its immaculate bosom to the sun,
 That hour a blight besieges all its cells:
 So in this fair fruition of his life
 A slow obsession of the Frate's foes
 Menaces his destruction. Not unmarked
 Our prophet shames the pontiff; not unscathed
 He quells the pranks and orgies Florence loves:
 More safely shall you grasp the hungry flames
 Than sould a Pope, or curb a city's sport.

Laodamia. Indeed the Pope is strong, but God, methinks,
 God and King Charles are stronger.

Lapo. God, Signora,—
 God is the quotient of two mighty factors,

Fortune and Force; whom God helps none may hinder.

But as for Charles, had but the Frate known
How Malice in its own despite enlarged him,
Showing a dagger blunted by his glance,
And Princes at his thunders dropping dead,—
And had he known withal how Louis' son
Shies like a colt at shadows —

Laodamia. Well, what then?

Lapo. Psha! He would know he rides upon a bubble.

Laodamia. The same methinks that Daniel trusted in,—
God's righteousness.

Lapo. Small matter, you will say,
How Charles was won, if he will fight our battle:
But will he?

Laodamia. Is he not sworn?

Lapo. "Aye, while it serves us,"
So says "good Guillaume." I doubt it will not
serve them.

Laodamia. [*Indignantly*] And who are you that you dare
prophesy?

Lapo. Only a mere interpreter, signora;
Yet, thanks to four good tongues and two good
ears,
In the way of my humble calling come some
secrets:

As this, [*Handing her a letter*]
The ambassador of Ludovic,

The Duke of Milan, writes it to a clerk
From Ferdinand of Spain.

Laodamia. [*In alarm*] What does it mean?

Lapo. Certes that Rome, Spain, Naples, Germany,
Milan and Venice, all the world to wit,
Will, ere Valori's boughs are clothed again,

Be leagued to wedge our Cyrus and his Daniel
 I' the boot of Italy, and crush them there.

Truly, Signora, his foes are gathering round.

Laudamia. [*After a pause*] God will protect the
 right.

Laps. He does it strangely :
 Count up the bands and butcheries of each Prince,
 You have, they say, the number of his leagues.
 Charles may have time to conquer Rome and Naples,
 And then - what said your father ? " All he wins,
 Slips from his grasp like sand through open fingers."
 If luck befalls, at best he cuts his way
 Back into France, like one pursued by wolves,
 Tossing to Milan Pisa and Leghorn,
 To Venice Genoa, - Spain Calabria,
 And to the Pope the foe he fears the most,
 Fra Jerome !

Laudamia. My God ! And they will burn him !

Laps. Yes, beyond doubt.

Laudamia. What can we do to save him ?
 Alas, I am a woman. And my father
 Has power no longer. Once he had, -yes, once.

Laps. I am a man, signora, and your servant.

Laudamia. Go, then, and warn the Frate.

Laps. No, signora.
 What can he do ? Don arms and fight the league ?
 No ; trust to me. I am not new at statecraft.
 With worldly wit we grapple worldly men.
 Merely as Prior of St Mark' the Frate
 Is quarry for the Pope ; as Cardinal
 Their falcons cannot strike him. Now's the time !
 Chief man in Florence, right hand of King Charles,
 A Cardinal's har is his ; it needs but the asking.

Laudamia. He ask !

Laps. He would not,—no : but we can.
Lazdama. We ?

Laps. You look askance upon my hose ; and rightly :
 What folly flaunts in silk, what wit in fustian !
 That fault your wealth corrects.

Lazdama. Sure but in Rome
 They are great lords, and inaccessible.

Laps. Alps have their passes, castles have their posterns,
 And the holy father has the fair Vanozza.
 Eheu ! fugaces : I knew her, not unkindly :
 A jest delights her . . . By the Mass, I have it !
 Employ a sculptor : bid him mould the Frate :
 Plaster will serve, —full length and highly coloured.
 Straightway Vanozza gives a little supper.
 Enter the Pope : first dish, announced a peacock,
 Huge, cooked with feathers. Lift the cover, lo !
 The pestilent Monk, a Bobadil in frocks,
 Sword in his hand, obscene, absurd, his mouth
 Puffing great prophecies : Gladius super terram
 Cito et velociter. Borgia laughs and swears,
 Fronting at last the goblin of his dreams.
 Then up trips fair Vanozza, blows a kiss,
 Draws from her silken gown a scarlet hat :
 “ Cardinal dear, your sword ! This serves you
 better ! ”

The hint is taken, and the Frate saved.

Lazdama. Go, sirrah ! I will have nought to do with
 this :

It shames me that I talk with you.

Laps. Ebbene !

Then leave the Monk to perish.

Lazdama. I will not hear you !

Laps. Nay then, I urge you not ! Your hands are white,—
 So white, forsooth, you fear a speck of soot :

There's one the Monk must perish in the flames.
 Addio, signora. In your dreams to-night
 Think of some other men who dared the Pope :
 Huss, the Bohemian, burnt alive at Constance ;
 The friends of Waldo racked and flayed and frozen ;
 Arnold of Brescia hanged and burnt at Rome ;
 Dolcino, naked, carried in a car,
 Piecemeal with red-hot irons pinched to death,
 His bones laid bare, his eyes, ears, nostrils, fingers,
 Tossed to the gibing crowd, and then he died :
 All holy men who shamed a profligate Pope,
 Think of their fates ; for such will be the Frate's.
 I quit you. Addio !

Laudamia. No, Signor, stay !
 What do you ask ? For furtherance ? Never, signor !
 Gold ? It is charity . . . How much ?

Laf. Heaven save you :
 A matter of some five hundred crowns. For, see :
 Rome and the arts are costly.

Laudamia. Pray you, wait.

Exit Laudamia.

Laf. {*Alone*}
 Still fair, sweet wife ; and still thou wear'st a
 bodkin.
 Yet, faith, we've dropped a poison on the tip,
 Sugar'd, but like to canker in thy breast.
 Bene ! King Charles has failed us ; this is better.
 The Borgia buys his mistress of her husband
 For an argosy of gold and the rank of Marquis.
 Next to the Borgia, Jerome to-day
 Is counted mightiest frock in Christendom,
 Champion of Chastity, hence in my power.
 To-morrow sees him Pope, and in that chair
 There's foothold for my climbing.

Laodamia. [*Entering with a bag of money*]

Signor, here . . .

Oh, but my mind misgives me. Wait one day :

Let me ask counsel.

Lapo.

Humbly I say it, Signora :

Then I refuse the money : secretly

Is urgent. As for your misgivings, say :

Can Love prompt evil actions ?—Love, I mean,

Of holy causes.

Laodamia.

Truly : but, O Signor !

Do nothing that dishonours him we serve.

Lapo. Trust me, signora. . . .

[*She hands him the money*] I shall write from Rome :

Meanwhile, allow the hint : a Cardinal

Stands high above reproach. . . . a woman's care,—

Not one of them but has it. . . . Not so, now :

The Frate is not Cardinal as yet ;

Though by Heaven's grace he shall be. Fare
you well. *Exit.*

Laodamia. [*Alone*] “The sad wild faces” and “the lonely
cell !”

So wan ! So worn !—To save him once again !—

Has he, have I no right to happiness ?

ACT III

SCENE I.—*Florence. The Duomo or Cathedral. Chorus of the white-robed Children of the King. A crowd intent on Savonarola, who is in the pulpit concluding his sermon.*

Savonarola. Lastly, O Florence, hearken. There be those
 Who say “The Frate led us to this pass :
 He leagued us with the King of France, who snatched
 Pisa, Leghorn, Sarzana and Librefatta ;
 Who vowed to give them back, but holds them still ;
 And lo the league flames up against him, and
 Our fortunes are as faggots in the flame :
 All this the Frate did.” Now, Florence, hearken :
 Charles is not conquered yet,—not yet forsworn.
 Did I not meet the King a second time,—
 Command him, win his promises again ?
 Pisa he will surrender, and once more
 Gird on the panoply of God’s Revenge.
 Yet, lest he fail us, note ye this, O Florence :
 I leagued ye not with Charles. My politics
 Are not to bind nor break with Rome or France.
 Tides ebb and flow : I build alone on God.

O Italy, a merry dance is thine,
 Fain to link always with the strongest arm,—
 Now this, now that. Have ye not heard of old,
 God built the world ? Is any strong as He ?
 Think ye that when the stanchions of this pile
 Were laid, Arnolfo parleyed with the winds,
 Saying, O North Wind, Tramontana, prop
 This wall ; Libecciate, wind of rains,
 For thee this conduit ? Nay, Arnolfo took
 Counsel with God : the oaks, the steadfast pines,

The shapely flowers, the laws that moving the stars
In rhythmic orbits,—these admonished him.

For as the heavens are builded, so this Dome;
And as the stars above thee, so within!

Thy duty shines. Yea, like a dream this world
Melts, and our days fly up like wreaths of smoke;

- Nor is aught firm but Righteousness and God.

Wherefore I made my pact with God alone:

Thou, Florence, art established on Right.

Plant thou thy feet upon this rock, and nations
Shall break like hail upon thy battlements.

Yea, plant thy feet, but not as those who play
At tourney with their paste-board bourdonasses:
No joust is this; God's chivalry are ye.

Crusaders, go ye forth; gird on your sword,

The unconquerable steel Contempt of Death,—

Victory is yours! O Florence, thou shalt conquer,—

Yea, though thou fight the whole world, and alone.

This is the question, this the hour; thy Conscience,

The Voice of God within thee, City of Florence,

Stands up before thee, cries in my voice, Choose

"Twixt goods that perish, or the eternal Good,—

Choose thou, to chaffer with the Lords of Lust,

That make this land one seething vat of crime,

Or now, for life or death, a band elect,

Uplift and plant the Gontalon of God. . . .

Thou wilt? Behold thy captain, sworn to stand

Or fall with thee! . . . Thou wilt not? Florence, I,—

I who have stood upon thy walls and cried—

Cried in the night to all the nations round,

"The enemy is upon thee! Rise! Awake!"—

O Florence, I go forth alone, alone!

Take thou my body, Christ: I can no more!

Make me thy martyr! Yea, I kiss the Cross!

Thou! A my body in the flames of anguish !
 Thou shalt not triumph, Satan, though this dust
 Is cast upon the winds. — Like seed, yea like
 Vines in wild places flung when waters fail,
 Touched by the well-spring of thy Love, 'twill rise, —
 Thanks be to God, who crown me with His thorns !

As he descends from the pulpit this hymn is sung.

All.

Son of Mary, Paraclete,
 Sower of celestial wheat,
 Stars in sky and love in clay,
 Florence cries to thee to-day :
 Viva Gesu, nostro re !

Voices of "The Children of the King."

Thou hast trod our pathway lowly,
 Making thorns and blossom holy
 Gesu, at thy feet we lay
 Palms of love to strew thy way.
 Viva Gesu, nostro re !

Young men's voices.

When unholy shapes allure us,
 By thy sacred mount secure us ;
 Evil lives for us to slay, —
 God of Battles ours the fray.
 Viva Gesu, nostro re !

Girls' voices.

Cana fills our flasks with wine,
 Mingling marriage love with thine ;
 Orange flowers are thine array ;
 Trim our lamps to shine for aye.
 Viva Gesu, nostro re !

Duet.

Graves are footprints ; there thy feet
 Lit, and passing left them sweet.

Cypress blossoms into May :
 Loved ones there in peace we lay.
 Viva Gesu, nostro rè !

All.

Lo our ark is whelmed with grief.
 Waft, O Dove, thine olive leaf :
 Floods are rising, storms dismay :
 Through the casement waft thy ray.
 Viva Gesu, nostro rè !

Foes surround us ! Save us, Lord !
 Rise Jehovah ! Bare thy sword !
 Rise and hurl thy foes away !
 Florence cries to Thee to-day :
 Viva Gesu, nostro rè !

As the congregation files out Laodamia, clad in white, with the "Children of the King," is accosted by Lapo, now well dressed but still wearing a beard and unrecognised.

Lapo. Signora -

Laodamia. Signòr ?

Lapo. You have forgotten me ?

The Guide,—the Interpreter ; we met at Pisa.
 My mission for the Frate is accomplished.

Laodamia. [*Eagerly*] Yes ?

Lapo. "Foes surround us ; Save us, Lord," they sang ;
 And I am the answer to that prayer ; I bring
 The town's salvation in a Scarlet Hat :
 The little dinner of Vanozza did it.
 Fairest signora—

Laodamia. Let us tell him ! Come !

Lapo. Softly ! Valori waits to see him. Much
 Has passed this morning since he left his cell.
 First let the impact of calamity

Break his proud spirit; then, like balm, your voice,
Breathes of a sweet appeasement. Come this way.

Savonarola comes forward. Several men and women are waiting to speak with him, among them Valeri in the gown of the Signori, and a Usurer with a bag of gold. The two latter approach Savonarola. Valeri gives way to the Usurer.

Savonarola. My son, how can I serve you?

Usurer. [*With trepidation*] An't please you. . . .

God pardon me.

Savonarola. Fear not, but speak. Your name?

Usurer. Luigi, the money-lender, pray God pardon.

Savonarola. Who ask with deeds, not words, He will. . . .

What's here? *Pointing to the bag of gold.*

Usurer. Gold, father.

Savonarola. Or blood?

Usurer. Na, na! My name is good . . .

None pays but what he bargains at my table.

But an you please to buy some candlesticks,—

Gold, father, gold,—for the altar at Saint Mark's,—

So be you'll say for my little son that's dead

Some four score masses, here's as many ducats.

Savonarola. Luigi, Saint Marks requires not gold nor silver:

God's altars all are broken down with gold:

Yet if I say the masses for your son,

Will ye supply the lights? . . .

Usurer. Na, that is nought!

I'll more than that: one ducat buys your wax.

Savonarola. Luigi, our candles at Saint Marks are three,

Truth, Justice, and Compassion. Not from you
Shall four score ducats light them.

Usurer. "Na?" ye say :

Ye will not say the Masses ?

Savonarola. Yes, O Luigi :

For your bambino Masses shall be said :

But there will be no lights : all darkness, Luigi.

Usurer. Ye cannot say a Mass without the candles.

Savonarola. God sees by other lights than ours, my son.

Usurer. Na! Na! They'll say I will not pay the candles.

Savonarola. They'll say truth, my son.

Usurer. I'll make it five score : Come !

Savonarola. Not fifty buys them. Yee if you restore

To Messer Baccio's widow your extortion

That she may rear *her* little son, then, Luigi,

The candles might be lit.

Usurer. Come ! Here be six score.

Give her them, thou : I'll nought to do with her.

Savonarola. Think, Luigi : I might rob you of your gold.

Usurer. Na, father, we all know thee : come, come ! I'll trust thee.

Savonarola. You are poor, my son : you have no riches,—

Usurer. Eh ?

I'm not so sure I could not buy ye Pisa !

Savonarola. [*Continuing*] And if I robbed you of your only wealth,

And you should stand a pauper before God,

Crying to see your little son again,—

Usurer. Eh ? Eh ? What say ye, priest ? I will ! I will !

Savonarola. [*Continuing*] And God should say you are too poor for Heaven,—

Usurer. [*Fiercely*] I'll see him, aye I will. Here's ten score ! Come !

Put ye that in the prayers.

Savonarola. We pray with deeds. . . .

Yes, Luigi, God *will* say ye are too poor :

Rags! Rags of greed! Heaven will not have such
paupers!

But if that widow smiles on you, then God
Will see that smile in gold upon your soul,
And say, "Come look upon your son again."

Usurer. An't please you, father, come along with me:
I'll make you widow glad.

Savonarola. My son, I will.
So shall ye light the candles for your boy,
And Mass be said with candles once a week.
No riches, O my son, ye take to Heaven
Except your brothers' and your sisters' smiles.

[*Turns to Valori*] Messer Valori.

[*To Usurer*] Wait me, my son, without.

Valori, who has been speaking with another well-dressed Florentine, comes forward.

Valori. Good morrow.

Savonarola. Who is that?

Valori. One Cini, a convert.

Savonarola. Once exiled in Ferrara?

Valori. Yes, the same:

A Florentine of weight; spoken, they say,
For ballot. We may need him.

Savonarola. Ah, Cini,—yes!

A face once seen not often I forget.

Well, and the news?

Valori. The worst: King Charles of France

Turns renegade: our sword i' the sky, forsooth,

Was but a windlestraw, gone on a ruff.

Pressed by the league, his army flies to France.

Pisa, Leghorn, Sarzana,—they are sold.

Savonarola. Sold?

Valori. To our foes.

Savonarola. He swore upon the altar.

Valori. Who heeds an oath?

Savonarola. In Italy. But France—

Valori. Also the Pope pronounces you a heretic.

Savonarola. Valori, it is false. My creed is Rome's,—

My doctrine but to live the Upright Life.

Valori. The Eight withal are warned you must not preach.

Do you submit? Frate, we stand by you.

But since your breath has raised a storm beyond

Our manage for the hour, I counsel silence.

Savonarola. [After a pause] “Tulerunt lapides:—They took up stones

To cast at him; but Jesus hid himself,

And went out from the temple.” Thus my master . . .

Yes, for the hour I yield.

Valori. Said wisely, Frate!

Reef till the storm has passed; and for the rest—

Good cause, good courage. . . . Here comes
Benedetto.

Enter Fra Benedetto.

Benedetto. Frate! Valori! The city is up! The news

Spreads, and the Arrabbiati, Compagnacci,

The Tiepidi— all the hostile factions

Combine against us; Ludovic supports them:

Now they fear nought.

Valori. Fear? Orsù! But they shall!

The Eight are with us still,—the Eight shall teach
them, — — —

Out of a book whose words are strokes o' the sword—

The sword of Justice carven with the names

Of twice ten thousand honest citizens,

Who in the Frate see the arm of God.

Benedetto. But, will they see it now? I like it not.

Savonarola. [To Valori] Go then, my son; enroll all citizens:

Shame'd is that folk that guards with purchased
arm'

Home, honour, faith and freedom : free they are not,
But slaves of ease. *Exit Valori.*

Benedetto. Well said ! I drop my palette .

Steel is my brush ; no paradise I'll paint !

Nay, but I'll shew these rebels hell ! Hot red !

Savonarola. Bettuccio of the tavern speaks, I ween,

Not Brother Benedetto of St Mark's.

Benedetto. [Turns to go, musing] Aye, aye ! I'll shew
them hell ! I'll

Savonarola. Go ! do penance,

Working, as far as may be, night and day,

At the Hall of the Greater Council. Finish it :

Stablish our Temple of Mercy, that no soul,

However poor or base, convict of crime,

May be denied appeal. For as a man

Stricken looks inward, fain to cleanse his spirit,

So in this wrack the City first shall purge

Its own injustices, and then uplift

Clean hands in prayer, and cry on God for succour.

Exit Benedetto.

Cries. [From without] Frataccio ! Frataccio ! Give us back
our Pisa !

Enter a mob headed by Mazzinghi, Ridolfi and Cer.

Cer. [Struts in strumming his lute]

Ping, ping, ping !

Let the Piagnoni swing !

For the city's like a camposan—to,

With its miauling, bawling can—to,

And its "Gesu King !"

And its ting, ting, ting,

And its drivelling, snivelling san—to !

The Mob. Abbasso Francesi! Evviva, Evviva Roma!

One of the mob thrusts himself forward and shakes his fist at Savonarola, crying again:

Frataccio! Frataccio! Give us back our Pisa!

Savonarola. [Waving them back with his hands]

This is the temple of God! Away! Away!

Voices. Back! Back! The Prophet!

A Woman. [Crouching by a pillar and pointing at him]
Santiddio! See his eyes!

They pierce like swords;—kill like the basilisk.

Cei. [Striking his lute]

Ping! Ping! Ping!

Let the Piagnoni swing!

For the city's like a——

A Paciero, or officer of the cathedral, makes a rush at him. He runs off, laughing loudly.

Mazzinghi. [For whom meanwhile the crowd has made way]

Now, prithee, Frate, what is this we hear?

Was not your Cyrus vowed to give us back

Pisa, Leghorn, Sarzana, and Librefatta?

And lo, he sells them to our foes! What next?

Thou hadst thy Bonfire of the Vanities;

Our seaports, lands, allies,— wilt burn them too?

Wilt snatch the very garments from our backs?

Voices. Evviva Mazzinghi! Abbasso Frataccio!

Re-enter in haste, during the last words, Valori.

He confronts Mazzinghi.

Valori. What, thou, Mazzinghi? Thou among this rabble?

Mazzinghi. Yes; for I seek to save the city.

Valori. False!

Thou seekest leave to sin; thou evil fermer,

Thou vinegar of vice and malcontent,

What! dost thou chafe at piety and peace?

Will's crown again the lord of lies and lust?
Thou wilt it not.

Mazzinghi. Whom I crown is nought to thee.
My speech is with the Frate.

Valori. Thou, Mazzinghi,
Thou of the tyrant's faction?

Mazzinghi. No, Valori,
Thou knowest that I rebelled against the Medici.

Valori. Orsù! thou didst, for thou art rebel born, —
Thou and thy crew. •Fra Girolamo saved ye:
Else wert thou dead, or dungeoned in the Stinche.
Traitor, begone: or the wagging of thy hood
Shall wag thy truculent head off.

Mazzinghi shrugs and gives place to Ridolfi.

Ridolfi. [To *Valori*] Pardon, Signor:
Reverently I ask it of your Frate:
It flies about the city that the Pope
Forbids his preaching.

Savonarola. It is true, my son.

Ridolfi. Then, with obeisance, these good citizens
Pray you will not incur the wrath of Rome
Persisting.

Valori. Nay, but make no answer, Frate!
Ridolfi, ha! thou tyrant's understrapper!
But yesterday the rope was round thy neck.—
Who took it off? The Frate. Whelp, thou
knowest!

So dost thou pay? This for thy shaming, traitor.

Strikes him in the face. Savonarola interposes. A
cry of "The Guard!" Enter Constabulary.
The mob take flight. Mazzinghi and Ridolfi
remain.

Savonarola. [To *Valori*] My son, what have ye done?—
and in this church?

God and our foes forgive the sacrilege!
 Messer Ridolfi, as I bear no malice
 For this your ill requital, so I pray you
 Desist and pardon. What you ask I do.

Ridolfi. Ebbene, Father. . . . I have no fear, Valori.

Not here we quit accounts: they run! they run!

Mazzinghi. Farewell, Signori! We shall meet again:
 Not always will the light be on your side.

Exeunt Mazzinghi and Ridolfi.

Valori. That word is true. Already it is rumoured,—
 At the next ballot of the Eight, we face
 The backwash of the tide, with such as these
 Our Lords and Magistrates.

Savonarola. O stout Valori,
 Not in the ballot, nor in France we trust:
 In Deo speravi: quid faciat homo?
 What can flesh do to us whose strength is
 God?

Valori. Nay, Frate, not that day,—your day of Palms,—
 When in the hollow of your hand I said
 You held the town, and you replied, “Aye, aye!
 To offer it on the altar unto God!”
 Not even then had I a stouter heart.—
 Farewell! I rally the faithful to the Cause. *Exit.*

*Laodamia, with Lapo at a short distance behind her,
 draws near to Savonarola.*

Laodamia. Father, Oh can I speak with you?

Savonarola. Return
 Speedily, daughter: meet me here again.
 I seek for strength in prayer.

*Exeunt in different directions. The Duomo is dark
 and vacant for a brief space. Enter Cei and
 Dolfo. Cei drags a huge bag with the help of
 two urchins.*

Cei. So ho, sweet Dolfo!
Hast dogged those canting devils?

Dolfo. Aye.

Cei. And I.

The dead lie underneath us, and aloft—
The weathercock! Ha! ha! The wind has changed.
Now let us sing a hymn, and then to work.

[*Sings to his lute*]

O my pretty Bianchetto,
Tell me, whither hast thou flown?
I have searched thy casinetta,
And thy nooks and cameretta,
But Bianca there was none.

O her laugh! her cicalate!
'Twas a peal of little bells!
Now she's weeping her peccati,
With the ranting canting Frati:
Devils roast them in their cells

Dost know that sweet one, Dolfo?

Dolfo. What, thy songs?
Gnaf-fé! Thou knowst I cannot stomach them.
Wilt roast the Frate in his cell? By Bacco,
I am thy man.

Cei. Nay, O Ithuriel!
Thou seraph with the flaming sword! I speak
Of sweet Bianca. Dost thou know her?

Dolfo. Faugh!
She smells of paternosters.

Cei. True; and once
That was a wench as dainty as my lute.
These be sad times. Scarce can ye buy a kiss

For twenty crowns; and ere the Frate's day,
They sold them by the gross for half a lira.

Dolfo. What's i' that bag?

Cei. Dolfo, a secret! a secret!

That bag contains—what think ye? *He whispers.*

Dolfo. That is good!

Cei. We lay it in the pulpit; hide it well

With fragrant rose-leaves strewn as if in love:

Then shall he stand on it, the bag shall break:

He chokes, he sneezes, staked and swaddled in it.

Dolfo. Stay! I've a thought. [*Scratches his head*] Bacco,
I'll better that!

Dolfo has fancies: mark you that, old 'Cecco.

Hold! Stop you here!

Cei. What seek ye?

Dolfo. Spikes, man,—spikes!

Cei. What for, sweet Dolfo?

Dolfo. [*Pointing to the pulpit*] See ye that wooden edge?

That spout o' the preaching pot? He pummels that:

Bang on the rail. Ha! ha!

Cei. But how, my dearest,—

How hide thy thorns to grow among my roses?

Dolfo. Leave that to me.

Cei. Dolfo, thou art inspired.

I, too, sweet Dolfo. The afflatus of the Gods

Descends upon me. Harken, son of Mars!

Fetch me an ass: a lean, a hungry ass;

A frock, a cowl,—a spattered blackfriar's lucco.

Therein, sweet Dolfo, thou shalt dress the ass;

And prog him on the spear-point through the town,

Crying The Frate! The Frate!—until, pell-mell,

The whole town yelps and bellows at his heels.

Dolfo. By Bacco, that is good! It shall be done.

Cei. And when he climbs the pulpit on the morrow,—

Ha! the ass,—flayed, hung above the Frate!

A string shall jerk his ears and make them wag.

Dolfo. Aye, and the spikes, the—ha! ha! ha! Come,
'Cecco.

Cei. Cantate Domino! Now let us sing!

Wang! Wang! Wang!

Let the Frate go hang!

With his tattery, spattery luc-co,

And his sorry, sorry hen-laid cuc-co——

Dolfo. Truce o' thy little tin words and tum-tum-tummings.

Let us to work.

Exeunt.

Enter from the rear Savonarola. Laodamia comes forward.

They meet. The guide waits at a respectful distance.

Savonarola. You seek for counsel, daughter?

Laodamia. The clouds are dark,—so dark about you,
father.

Savonarola. True,—and our wheat ungarnered.

Laodamia. Ah, but you;

Wrestling alone amid the blinding wrack,

Tying your sheaves, tying your sheaves,—and he

The Pontiff,—he who wields the bolts of heaven,

Plunging them one by one, until at last

You fall. O father, night and day my dreams

Picture you so. Ah, could we shelter you! . . .

Girolamo, yes, we can! Have I done wrong?

I lead you into safety!

Savonarola. Safety, daughter?

For those who do the right no danger lives,—

No safety for the wrong.

Laodamia.

We fight the world:

We need some base. Charles fails us?

Savonarola.

O my daughter!

And if it break,—that reed we lean upon,
Is it not well? For so we fall on Gall!

Laodamia. Some rampart to your stronghold,—that we
need! . . .

If you were Pope? . . . Only from Peter's chair
Can you reform the church.

Savonarola. They say it—yes.

Laodamia. O father, if a White Bird from God's throne
Laid on your head a crown, a Cardinal's hat,
And bade you take the first step to that chair,—
Were you not glad?

Savonarola. Our vigils breed a vapour :
Daughter, you dream.

Laodamia. I speak the truth. To-night
The Papal Agent visits at your cell.
I am the White Bird,—ah, you called me that,—
Once in Ferrara, long ago, you said it,—
And on your head I lay God's coronal :
Father, the crown is yours.

Savonarola. They sent you? . . . Ha! . . .

Laodamia. Freely I come; I wrought this; I am proud.

Savonarola. And but this hour they called me heretic :
My God! Can this be true? . . . I will not
take it.

I spurn the bribe.

Laodamia. Sure, dignities refused
Are laurels given of God and flung to earth,
Weapons of service idly laid aside,
Brevets disdained in pride? What said your Dante
Of Celestine who, called to Peter's chair,
Returned the Great Refusal?

Savonarola. That, my daughter,
That was the Apostle's call to cleanse the Church;
This were Iscariot's silver. "Hush," cries Rome,—

"Be silent while we sin!" I will not hush:
My voice shall cry aloud.

Laodamia. O Father! Father!
Pity it were to impale your life and service
On this compunction, -- pity, ah how great,
To shipwreck all your mission on a scruple.
Are you not orthodox?

Savonarola. Yes, daughter, yes.

Laodamia. Then must you obey the Pope.

Savonarola. Is he the Pope
Who bought his crown with bags of stolen gold?
Should I be Cardinal if I should sell
My conscience for the Hat?

Laodamia. Think of the city.

Savonarola. I would, -- I would that I could give it ease.

Laodamia. You can, my father.

Savonarola. If I betray my Lord.

Laodamia. You do not. Oh, for our sakes I implore you!
As daughter of Florence, oh, I pray you do this!
For the world's sake do so and redeem the world;
For the Church's sake whom, yielding, you will save;
For your own dear safety, father, I beseech you!
Yes, by the love we bore of old, we two,
My Girolamo, say not No.

Savonarola. O my daughter,
You press me sorely. It is not well, -- not well!

Laodamia. If wrong there be, I answer before God.

There is no wrong: the crime is in refusal.

Savonarola. If I surrender, on terms implied, not said:
Dropping my sword to take it up again? --

Laodamia. Soon, Girolamo; and then to save the church.

Savonarola. [*Meditatively*] Man owes, I said, one debt:
to God alone, --

In paying which, he pays all debts to man.

God speaks within our Conscience, guiding so
 Our deeds, as Beauty guides the artist's hand :
 Whence comes the perfect picture of our lives.
 Conscience eschews this bribe ; the City cries
 Accept it. If a man betray his trust
 To save a city, will the Judge condemn him ? . . .
 Tell me, my daughter, are there terms explicit :
 Must I forswear my mission ?

Laodamia.

No, Girolamo.

Savonarola. Idle to shut our eyes——

*Lapo, who has drawn nearer during the colloquy,
 now interposes.*

Lapo.

Santissimo,

Pardon ! I heard your question. . . . By your
 leave, [*To Laodamia*]

I can assure the holy Frate :—Yes ;
 The terms are to your honour. When to-night
 The papal agent issues from your cell
 It will be cried through all the streets, “Once more
 The Frate saves the City !” As from France,
 So now from the league you save it. Rome will see
 That Milan, Germany, Venice, Spain,—our foes,—
 Let fall their swords and stretch the hand of friendship.
 The seaports loved of Florence as a woman
 Dotes on her babes,—Pisa, Leghorn, Sarzana,—
 All are restored to her,—not vowed, but given.
 This is your second triumph. Grateful Florence
 Will shower on you her wealth. Supported so,
 Your reverence will succeed to Peter's chair,
 And from that summit rule the world for Christ.

Savonarola. There are no other terms ?

Lapo.

Santissimo, come :

Merely a little writing in your hand
 Renouncing your alliance with the French,—

(Silvius, recanting, climbed to Peter's Chair)
 Vowing to yield submission to the Pope,—
 (As do we all, true sons of Holy Church)
 And not denounce the Church's so-called errors,—
 (Leave this to God: His grace alone suffices).

Savonarola. [After a pause, deliberately]

"Assumpsit eum Diabolus:—the Devil
 Taketh Him into a mount exceeding high,
 And sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world:
 'All these are thine if thou wilt worship me'"—
 [In a terrible voice]

Get thee behind me, Satan!

Lapo.

Pardon, father:

My wits are wheezy hacks: your airy mountain,—
 By the Mass, they boggle at it!

Savonarola.

The papal agents

Need that I give an answer now?

Lapo.

To-night

Or never.

Savonarola.

Then, my son, we go our ways,—
 I to my Master,—they to theirs to say
 While Judas sits in Peter's Chair I take
 From him no red hat of a Cardinal,
 Rather the martyr's crown of blood.

Lapo.

Ebbene!

A pretty text! We are not i' the pulpit now.
 Mark that this answer flings the fatal glove:

War to the death,—and you are not the stronger.

Savonarola. Alas, my son, I would it were not now.

Lapo. Still time to alter, Frate.

Savonarola.

I have spoken.

Lap. One further word. We know your chastity.

None calls a lifelong passion base, and none
 Rebukes a Cardinal.

Savonarola. [*Looking from Lapo to Laodamia, who betrays confusion*] Ha, what is this?

Lapo. All frock,—no flesh,—is pleasing unto Heaven:
Reverently I say it: also on earth
The chaste embrace of rack and flam' consoles. . . .
Still the same answer?

Savonarola. Go, thou son of Satan!

Lapo. Addio, Santissimo.

Lapo withdraws. Savonarola gazes for a moment reproachfully at Laodamia, then turns to go.

Laodamia. What have I done!

Girolamo! Father! Forgive me! Speak one word!

Savonarola. [*Pointing to Lapo*] Your husband.

Laodamia. [*Wildly and with amazement*] Husband?

Savonarola. Join him. As for me,
If it be death, I trust in God. Farewell.

SCENE II.—*The same. The Duomo is dimly lighted. Delfo Spini and 'Cecco Cei descend from the pulpit. Enter Ridolfi and Mazzinghi.*

Ridolfi. Well met! And is the Frate's carpet laid?

Cei. Aye: but the rose-leaves will not cover it.

Ridolfi. The ass's skin is hung?

Delfo. Aye, wi' the ears:

But, Gnaf-fé! they will not wag.

Cei. Fellows, I swear

The Frate has bewitched the place.

Delfo. Aye, that is so.

Ridolfi. 'Cecco, I missed your pageant of the ass.

Cei. Talk not to me, Ridolfi: I am sick! I am sick!

Fellow, the town's a corpse. As well, I say

Cry Oyez! Oyez! to dead men in their graves

As set these snivellers yelping to our tune.

Mazzinghi. None followed your halloo?

Cer. A score of Ciompi,

Some gutter fry, and cutthroats out of work.

Mazzinghi. The rest?

Cer. Clove their doorsteps, shrugged or scowled.

Then turned to drone their damned paternosters.

I am sick! I am sick! The town's a corpse, I say.

Delfo. Valori has scared yon rabbits to their holes.

Ridolfi. So where's thy chance of ballot now, Mazzinghi?

Delfo. Gnaf-te! I would have sworn the wind blew south.

Mazzinghi. From Rome? And so it did.

Ridolfi. This morning.

Mazzinghi. Yes.

Ridolfi. Now not a breath! A dead and damned calm!

What's to be done, eh, Dolto?

Delfo. I say, Halt!

And let their pudding stew.

Ridolfi. O sapient Spini!

Cer. Bah! it will stew till Doomsday.

Ridolfi. By St Anna,

Fellows, we are fooled! The world against one
shaveling,

And yet we dare not fell him to the earth.

Lapo issues from behind a pillar, where he had been
kneeling, close but unseen.

Lapo. Signors, a citizen of Rome, I greet you!

I rise from my devotions and beh old

Four illustrissimi: birth, sword and song,

And law—each at its apex. Happy Florence!

Immedicable Rome.

Ridolfi. Immedicable?

Why, signor? What disease has Rome?

Lapo. The itch.

Delfo. Then let the city scratch itself.

Lapo. Ser Dolfo,

The itch is named the Frate.

Ridolfi. We have it too :

Worse, signor, worse !

Lapo. What ! you ?—You have the cure.

Dolfo. Gnaf-fé ! I would we knew it.

Lapo. Ah ! You do not ?

You fear this monk ? Daggers are his, and dungeons,
And courts to doom his foes ?

Mazzinghi. Well, no.

Lapo. What then ?

Mazzinghi. Signor, perceive : we fear the town, not him.

Three parts of it are his : he nods our laws

To twenty thousand knees upon this floor.

Lapo. So ! He is doubtless Jove, or Caesar. Yet
Some wise man progged an ass along your streets,
And cried, "The Frate !"

Mazzinghi. [Looking toward *Cer*] A kite to catch the wind :
No breeze : they shrug and say, "He prophesies."

Lapo. And did not Balaam's ass ? And still methinks
'Twas but an ass : obstinate, and a brayer . . .
They say your ass was stripped.

Dolfo. We flayed him.

Lapo. And then ?

Ebbene ! Death soon followed ?

Dolfo. That is wrong :

We slew him first.

Lapo. Nay, but you were not wise.

Dolfo. Ha' pity on your beast !

Lapo. [Shrugs] With due obeisance,—
Should we not say, Have pity on your Florence,
That cannot ride its ass, but must forsooth
Be ridden by it ?

Dolfo. That is true.

Lapo.

And why?

Because it will not strip him.

Mazzinghi.

Prithee, Signor?

Lapo. Unmask, detect, expose. Where lies his power?

In righteousness?—I voice the heart of Florence

When I protest we all love righteousness,

But trade is better.—Where, then? As you say,

They cry, "He prophesies!" And so they fear him.

But, Sirs, I am a philosopher: I would try

This prophet as your alchemist a metal.

You do not comprehend? Can any of you

Propose a quirk to rid us of a quack?

Ridolfi. Not I.*Dolfo.*

Nor I.

Ridolfi.

Thou, 'Cecco.

Cei.

I am sick! I am sick!

Lapo. What wager that I shall not do this thing?*Dolfo.* By Bacco, I will wage five hundred ducats:

That will I pay to prick this ass's hide.

Lapo. Done, Messer Dolfo. Sirs, you witness this?*All.* Aye, aye!*Lapo.*

Now shall I show you?

Dolfo.

Aye, we hearken.

Lapo. Signors, four centuries ago and more,

In the year of our Lord ten hundred and sixty-three,

Your great Piazza saw a marvellous sight:

An Earthly Purgatory,—faggots piled,

Two flaming alleys, and adown their midst

Two champions vowed to walk and prove their
cause:

That, Signor, of the Frate against the Pope.

God would protect the right (an ancient error),

And singe no fleece upon the good man's cloak.

Signors, the precedent is on your Book

Of Statutes to this day. It is the law,—
The applicable law.

Marzanghi. Aha!

Delfo. By Bacco!

Gen. The Trial by Fire! So ho! The Trial by Fire!
I'll sing a rondel on the Trial by Fire!

Lapo. If, then, he shun the test, the ass is stripped,
Or if he dares it, he is burnt to death.

Delfo. Ha! ha! We'll twig the city's ears wi' that:
Yell down the street "We'll ha' the Trial by Fire."

Lapo. Sott, friend! The Magistrates, the Eight, are still
Twirled on the Friar's thumb. They soon retire?

Marzanghi. Lre Lent.

Lapo. You seek election?

Marzanghi. We are named.
What chance?

Lapo. The best. Rome plies her engines, Signor.
Henceforth, no compromise. First—interdict;
Ports closed, trade stopped by the league,—you
comprehend me?

The argument ad ventrem. Next, ad fatuas,
To wit the pious,—excommunication;
We starve the men, we send the wives to hell:
Groundbait for angling. Here's your ballot-cry,—
"Save triale; please Rome; cheap bread and easy
shirt."

The mob is at your beck; the wand of Justice
Descend, upon you: you are the Eight elect.
You comprehend me, Signors?

Delfo. That is well.

Marzanghi. Then shall the Eight propose the Trial by
Fire?

Lapo. Nay, by your leave, that were a bungler's shift.
As ladies angle with a covert hook,

Bashful and modest, so your judge affects
 The air impartial. Sirs, this trial proceeds
 By challenge,—life for life: that is the form.

Dolfo. No, I! The taste of steel I know; but fire!—
 I like it not!

Lapo. Ser Dolfo, you indeed
 Have other work. Always we ride the Passions.
 An all too Christian love, ye may have noted,
 Greyfriars to Blackfriars bear. . . .

Dolfo. . . . Will 't run to that?

Lapo. On certain warranties: safety to them, —
 To your Blackfriars —no. . . . These be details.
 Addio!

We meet again.

They bow. Exit Lapo.

Mazzinghi. Bene! The Trial by Fire.

Dolfo. Aye, that is good.

Gen. I wish it were not fire.

Pity your beast, sweet Dolfo.

Dolfo. What? Art squeamish?

Gen. Bianca will not like it: no, she will not.

Yet "fire" is a good rhyme, a very good rhyme

"Water": that is not good: I could not make

A verse to rhyme with "water."

Mazzinghi. Didst note that word?

"Riding the passions?"

Dolfo. So?

Mazzinghi. And that about

Philosophy?

Dolfo. Aye, aye!

Ridolfi. A cunning knave.

Mazzinghi. [To *Gen.*] Dost thou forget Ferrara?

Gen. How forget it?

The song; the dance; 'Nozza, the great white lotus!

Mazzinghi. True, and the Pazzi's friend, your Lapo.

Delfo. [Startled] What ?

Mazzinghi. We thought him dead. 'Tis he.

Delfo. Gnaf-fé ! Gnaf-fé !

Mazzinghi. Signors, walk warily. That man sold his friends.

Delfo. I do not like a man that sells his friends.

Mazzinghi. The bland, the guileless face. Changed certes : beard

And tan and wrinkles ; also a leer has crept
Into the innocent eyes.

Delfo. It is the same !

Cei. And yet he loved a song. I mind him well :

Free of his gold,—a supple gleesome hound.

Mazzinghi. The dog would dine upon his master's bones.

Cei. But share them with his cronies,—aye, he would !

Mazzinghi. For this deed he may earn his wage.

Delfo. And shall.

ACT IV

SCENE.—*Florence; the Piazza della Signoria, seen through the Loggia (or Portico) dei Lanzi. On the right hand the Palazzo Vecchio with the Ringhiera. In front three capacious wooden *tribuna*, or platforms raised five feet from the ground and draped with arras. On the left hand a large pile of faggots with a *cul-de-sac* opening. The foreground is at first vacant. The populace are seen in the rear around and beyond the pile; and the balcony of a house in the Piazza is thronged. Doff Spini with men-at-arms keeps back the populace from the open space.*

Voices. [In the crowd] Affretta, Frate! Affretta!
Avvanzati!

A Citizen. As though good folk must let their trade go shift,

Jammed, all a swelter, on a rainy day,
Agog for skulking priests!

2nd Citizen. “The Trial by Fire”

They call it? Pheugh! ’tis us that’s tried by water.

3rd Citizen. And well ye are served, that make of God himself

A Caterer for your lust of shows and shambles.

2nd Cit. And do not ye, good Master Puccio, eh?

3rd Cit. Not I, i’ faith!

2nd Cit. Why here then, Master Puccio?

Voices. Affretta, Frate! Affretta! Avvanzati!

Several Workmen issue from the Loggia bearing wood. The crowd watches them in silence.

1st Workman. [*Examining the wood*]

Wet all atop, but these be dry inside.

2nd Workman. Like us now, be it not ?

1st Workman.

And no mistake.

2nd Workman. They say, if he come out o' this alive,

The next to go inside'll be the Pope.

They replace the damp wood with dry.

Woman's Voice. [*Shrilly in the pause*]

Sidrach's the blessed Frate ; Misach—Domenico ;

Silvestro's Abidinago. 'Then you'll see

Messer Lord God Himself among the flames

Kissing the blessed Frate on the cheek.

Oh what a grace we live to see this day !

Exeunt Workmen with the damp wood.

Voices. Affretta Frate ! Affretta ! Avvanzati !

Cei. [*Speaking from a balcony*] Silence, ye citizens ! Have
~ patience.

One of the crowd.

Tut !

Patience may sit on stomachs full of wine.

Mine's empty. Curse the shavelings ! I've been
here

Since morning.

Cei. Man, be thankful for thy mercies.

Thou canst not smell Frate every day.

*The Workmen return with more wood. The
murmur of the crowd grows silent again.*

Woman. [*Shrilly*] And there i' the dark they saw the
blessed Frate

Transfigured like our Saviour on the Mount ;

And on his shoulder sat a holy Dove,

Like Mary's star upon the crimson dawn ;

And all his feathers were of gold and silver ;

And in the blessed Frate's ears he sang :

And that is how he knows the things to be.

2nd Cit. Pheugh! I'm all sweat and drench!

1st Cit. Miracles? Bah!

I'll sit in church and see Saint Lawrence roast.

There's Signorelli's picture shows you that.

"I'm done this side," says he. Ha! ha! He liked it.

2nd Cit. We're done on both sides: cheated of our show,
And a good day's trading gone.

3rd Cit. For shame!

A second Daniel in our midst to-day.

And that is all ye prate of! Thank the Lord

The pebbles' chatter does not turn the tide.

2nd Cit. If fire kill Frate, think ye Master Puccio,
Then will it turn?

3rd Cit. Your "ifs" would laugh at God.

2nd Cit. How, Master Puccio?

3rd Cit. Is God then such as ye,
Longer in the tongue than the arm? Nay, let thy
crew

Gape on an "if": I tell thee there be those,

Ten thousand of us in this place to-day,

That brabble not, but know.

1st Cit. Know what? Eh, Messer?

3rd Cit. The breath of God that swept us in the Duomo
Shall from this Piazza blow the flames we light,
So that they touch no finger of the Frate,
But burn the Borgia out of Peter's chair.

Many Citizens [Ejaculating piously] Well said! Well said!

1st Cit. What now? Here's some of them.

As the Workmen retire again, *Messengers, Alberti,
Lapo, and Cei show themselves on the Ringiera,
and look silently on the crowd for a moment.*

Lapo. [In the foreground: pensively] Too near, too near!
Another four score yards.

1st Cit. [In the rear] Two of the Eight, eh Messer?

2nd *Cit.* So they be.

The Signors Pier Alberti, and Mazzinghi.

The Trial begins !

Voices. Affretta, Frate ! Affretta !

Dolfo crosses the open space and accosts Alberti and Mazzinghi.

D-ffo. Gnaf-fé ! What now ? The pot's aboil this four hours.

Where is thy champion ?

Enter Secretary.

Secretary. Found, my lords, found at last.

Mazzinghi. Where ?

Secretary. In the cellars, crouching 'neath a hogshead ;

So scared, my lord, he looked from cask to cask

As, an he might, he would have gone inside.

Cei. The strait and narrow path to heaven, pardee :

You crawl in through the bung-hole.

Alberti. Is he at hand ?

Secretary. Dragged in the convent cart, my lord, so far.

Mazzinghi. By the Mass then bring him forth. Dost think yon crowd

A flight of summer flies ?

Secretary. Six men might drag him.

Being esteemed a judge of art, my lord,

I fear that crowning touch would mar our canvas.

Lup. Bene, it is no matter.

Alberti. No matter, Signor ?

Is not the champion pivot of this trial ?

We must respect the law. And, sirs, moreover,

It was his taunts that brought the Blackfriars here.

Lapo. Nay, pardon! [*pointing across the Piazza*]

Yon grey bird on the Torrione—
Is it a dove or pigeon?

Alberti. I cannot tell.

Lapo. Nor yonder crowd one greyfriar from another.

Alberti. Not at this distance?

Lapo. They are too near—I own it.

Your pardon, Signors. [*Turning to the Secretary*]

Does the palace hold

Gunpowder?

Secretary. Yes.

Lapo. And pitch?

Secretary. It can be had.

Lapo. And oil; and resin?

Secretary. Doubtless.

Lapo [*turning to Mazzinghi*] I shall need

Some ten score ducats.

Mazzinghi. Thou art a hungry wisdom.

Lapo. Nay, by your leave; for mobs are swayed with
catchwords:

Catchwords are seed, and history is the harvest.

But sowers must be paid,—my function. Thus:

Voices among the crowd shall raise a cry:

“The Frate counts on charmed frocks, wet
wood,

Winds, witchcraft.” But the Greyfriars? They
are fearless: [*Laughter among the bystanders*]

Nay, that the flames may fiercelier burn, they
ask

Gunpowder! Oil! [*Continued laughter*]

Stout Greyfriars! Dastard Frate! . . .

Next, roll the barrels out: the crowd take fright;

And in the stampede, sirs, we gain our distance.

Then, Capitano, hedge our ring with spears;—

No need to drag Fra Rondinelli forth :
 Now any pigeon serves to face your crow ;
 " Behold," they'll cry, " The brave man for the
 Trial."

You comprehend me, Signors ?

Dolfo. That is well.

Lupo. Caw crows,—coo pigeons ! None shall hear their
 gabble.

All's dumbshow to the crowd - this only clear :
 There is delay ; the Frate shirks the powder :
 What proof more sure ? We roll the casks away !

Dolfo. Oh !

Gen. Aha !

Mazzinghi. Yes,—roll the casks away.

Lupo. He fools, he cheats us, honest citizens !

Hell's loose. Now Capitano, give the word :
 Withdraw your guard : the Trial by Fire is
 closed.

Suddenly, Signors, at a sign arranged.
 The mob will do the rest. You comprehend me ?
 An end to the Frate, and no murder done :
 Merely some casks rolled to and from the pile.

Alberti. Hush ! . . . Messer Cini.

Mazzinghi [*aside to Lupo*] One of the Eight ; knows
 nothing ;

Opposes on the Council . . . Come : this way.

Cini approaches and accosts Alberti. Mazzinghi,

Lupo, Cini and Dolfo retire in company.

Cini. Messer Alberti, what is this I hear ?

Alberti. Nothing but what, as one of the Eight, you know.

Cini. The braggart Friar who egged us to this crime,
 Fra Rondinelli, skulks. Then, close the Trial.

Alberti. Nay, how, my friend ?

Cini. Ask not the " how," but do it.

For this man saved the city.

Alberti. Grant it, Signor.

But he consents. He claims a prophet's power.

We put the claim to trial. What more just?

Cimi. A barbarous trial—a black, a brigand's justice.

Alberti. Friend, hast thou seen a rabble balked of sport?

Cimi. Aye, and a thousand would not make me play

The Judas to a Saint.

Alberti. Saint if you will:

We must be rid of him: Rome asks it, *Cimi*.

We have been ruled too long by Paternosters.

Now look you where it leaves us: Pisa lost;

Rome, Venice, Naples, Germany, Spain and Milan

In league against us; commerce in decline;

The city interdicted. Friend, I say,

With the small key of this man's life we open

To our arms the gates of Pisa and Leghorn,

To our flagging trade the ports of half the world,

And Heaven to every dying citizen

Sped by the Pope's writ to the eternal fire.

Better it is to doom one guiltless man

Than to embroil a city.

Cimi. Man, thou liest:

Justice is more than thou or I or Florence.

Thy dastard's betterment would make this town—

This Tuscan Paradise of enchanted towers—

kennel a race of coystribs. When to this

A nation falls, her freedom is foredoomed,

Dead at the very core, whose nerve and pulse

Was justice, fervid, passionate, intense.

Pause not to rivet gyves on such a race:

Its blood, its brain, the milk within its breast,

Begets, in thought and deed, slaves, harlots, despots.

Alberti, art thou stubborn?

Alberti. The city's good
Demands it, Signor.
Cini. Then, go tell the Eight
That Cini sits not at the shameful board
With six Iscariots and a Pontius Pilate.
Messer, enough ! I have done with thee ! farewell !

Exit. Enter Secretary. Mazzinghi and Lapo follow.
Secretary. My lord, your fellow Magistrates await you.
Mazzinghi. Our plans are laid ; the pageant may begin.
You will preside ?

Alberti. [mechanically] The city's good demands it. . . .
Yes, yes—the city's good.

Mazzinghi. Carp, quibble, browbeat—
Dance to the tune that Mariano pipes.
Meanwhile—the powder—oil.—You understand.
All is arranged.

Alberti. [suddenly] I will have none of it
It irks my soul. This is a just man.

Mazzinghi. Prithee ?

Alberti. The plot is yours : speak, Messer, you ; for me,
I wash my hands of it ; I hold aloof.

Mazzinghi. What, you, our chief ?

Alberti. Ebbene ; I will sit :
Session is not assent. This deed is yours.

Lapo [steps forward briskly and addresses the crowd].
People of Florence, my fellow citizens,
The trial will now begin. I pray your reverence,
As before Heaven whose fiat we invoke :
Also pay heed to your own safety. Sirs,
Conning the mighty issues of this trial,
And how a specious victory may be won
By a breeze that parts the flames, a sudden shower,

Or failure of the fuse—Fra Rondinelli,
The fearless champion of our Holy Pope,
Asks that for certitude the pile should bear
Gunpowder, oil, pitch, re in—

A murmur of alarm among the crowd

Have no fear,

As yet, my friends, the powder is not placed. . . .
Whether the Frate, whom may Heaven protect,
Will brave the harsher test, that, sirs, I know not.
Gods that can save from fire, can save from
powder:

But he, perhaps, sets store by other aids.

Messers, we soon shall see. The trial begins.

A fierce burst of the flames, a sudden crash, - -

The tongue, the doom of Heaven: God's voice
has spoken!

Does God condemn the Pope? He saves the monk.

Behold, our Frate on the Loggia steps

Unsingd, unsmoked, holding the cross aloft!

He is a prophet! Follow him to the death.

But if he shrink, evade, or dare and die,

It is a charlatan! Have done with him!

Back to your trade, and to the Church's bosom . . .

Make way! See, tellow citizens, the powder!

*Four barrels are rolled in, marked severally "Pitch,"
"Oil," "Resin," "Gunpowder." The
crowd retires with precipitation, leaving a
large clear space round the pile, which is
immediately occupied by Delfo's men-at-arms.
Mazzinghi, as Lapo retires, hands him a bag
of money.*

Lapo. [joining Cei] Come, Messer Cei, hast thou thy lute
in tune?

Cei. And thou? Hast thou thy wallet filled?

Lapo. With gold
 Enough to make the city sing.
Cei. Then come.

Exeunt. Enter, in the gowns of office, the Eight Magistrates [Otto di Guardia e Balìa] with their Secretary and a Herald, Cini being absent. They ascend the large rostrum. Alberti takes the head place. Next to him sits Mazzinghi. Around this rostrum are placed a guard of men-at-arms. Enter, thereafter, Fra Mariano and two other grey-friars. He ascends one of the smaller rostra.

Loud Chanting from without

Exsurgat Deus, et dissipentur inimici Eius,
 Et fugiant qui oderunt Eum a facie Eius;
 Sicut deficit fumus deficiant,
 Sicut fluit cera a facie ignis,—
 Sic pereant peccatores a facie Dei!

Enter lastly, in procession, Fra Domenico in a cope of red velvet, bearing a great cross; by his side Savonarola carrying the Host; and Fra Silvestro, followed by numerous other Blackfriars. The three first enter the second small rostrum opposite Fra Mariano. The other Blackfriars stand grouped at a respectful distance; one at the forefront, of youthful appearance, betrays under the guise of a young Monk the features of Luadamia.

Secretary. [Reading in official tones]

Whereas the reverend Prior of St Mark's,
 Fra Jerome, hath maintained seven several theses
 Touching our holy church; and thereanent
 Fra Rondinelli, a Minim Friar, affirms
 That these said theses err and promulgate,
 To the offence and scandal of all simple souls,

A heretic cause against our Holy Pope ;
 Whereas, withal, Fra Rondinelli hath,
 Pursuant to ancient statutes of this state,
 Challenged to a trial by fire, and boldly vowed
 With any champion of Fra Jerome
 To enter side by side the flames ; and lastly
 Whereas Fra Dominic, a Major Friar,
 Doth duly accept the challenge as aforesaid :
 Now by our respectable Lords and Magistrates
 It is decreed the trial shall take place,
 And Heaven shall witness which of these be true :
 And if the said Fra Dominic shall burn,
 Fra Jerome shall be banished from this State,
 And to the sentence of the Pope delivered,
 And may the Lord have mercy on his soul.

Herald. {*blows a blast of his trumpet*}

Dominic, art thou here ?

Fra Dominic. I am.

Herald. Come forth :
 Prepare to stand within the flaming pile.

Fra Dominic. Aye, by the mercy of our blessed Saviour,
 I am prepared. My body to the flames
 I do consign ; not doubting that my Lord
 Will save me as in holy Daniel's time
 Sidrach was saved ; that lust and fraud and lies
 May perish from His Church, and God Himself
 In our dear brother Jerome's words and works
 Be unto all the world made manifest.

Herald. Rondinelli, art thou here ?

Fra Mariano. He is.

Herald. Come forth :

• Prepare to stand within the flaming pile.

Fra Mariano. Magnificent Lords, my brother rests
 within,

Expectans Dominum.

One of the Eight leans over with his hand to his ears to catch the phrase.

Waiting God, my lord,—

Humble, convinced of his unworthiness,
Not drunk with vaunt and bluster like as these,
Yet, like Empedocles on Etna's brink,
Fearless and——

Suddenly flings his arms out fiercely toward Fra Domenico.

Ha! Avaunt Sathana! See!

A fraud! A trick! That red frock is bewitched!
Let him be stripped, I say!

Fra Domenico.

Sirs, it is false!

Mazzinghi. Your hesitance attaints you of the charge.

Prithee comply.

Fra. Mariano.

Tut! in the name of justice

I ask it.

Savonarola. [to Domenico] Change it, brother, if they will.

Beckons. Laodamia disguised as a young Monk comes forward eagerly.

Laodamia. Father, for your sake, yes, I walk the flames.

Savonarola. Alessandro, is it thou? We ask your frock:
Change it with brother Domenico.

Laodamia. [ruefully]

But, father——

Savonarola. Enough! The flames shed lustre on your soul
Go do the lesser service and content thee.

*Exit Fra Domenico with the young Monk:
Savonarola and Silvestro kneel in prayer; the
Eight lean to one another and discourse
undertones, smiling at times. Meanwhile
a balcony in the rear enters Cei masked as
fiend, lute in hand, clad in scarlet; with hor-
mock hooves, and a tail.*

Cei. [Singing, with a mysterious note of deprecation in the "Aha!"]

Now Satan hath his jacket back!

Aha! Aha!

In witches' blood he dipped the sack,—

No burning that! But now, alack,

"Papa! Papa!"

Cries Frate "Must we fry?"

Saith Satan "So do I."

Aha! Aha!

Fra Domenico reappears in the usual black frock of his order. Laudamia disguised as the young Monk is now clad in red.

Mariano. Aha! [Crosses himself.]

Mazzinghi. What now?

Fra Mariano. Sacrilege waits on witchcraft.

See, my lords, see! They burn the blessed cross!

Mazzinghi. Nay, certes, there you wrong them.

[To Savonarola] That, good father,

Goes not to yonder pile, as shall we say,

Libidinous pictures, false hair, bangles, trinkets, •

The like of which ye burnt two Lents ago,—

All in one Bonfire on this same Piazza,—

Your "Vanities" forsooth?

Savonarola. Not so we hear it,

But even as those who call on God, and say:

To us, O Lord, weak sinful men is given

This mighty charge, to save a world that sails

Down on a weltering tide of Lies and Rapine,

Wherein all bounds of Right are washed away:

And now behold they have us by the throat,

They thrust us rudely to the flames and cry:

"Show us a miracle, or else, pardee,

Well may we know that pope and prince are wise:

There is no good nor evil : teeth and talons,—
 These be the only right : Truth, Justice, Love,
 Are old wives’ fables, coined belike by the weak
 To save them from their rightful lords the strong ;
 And yet, ha ! ha ! if haply this your God
 Save ye from fire, then will we do him honour.”
 Thus do they laugh, O Lord : whence now we
 cry : —

“ Shine in the flames that wrap us round, O Cross !
 A beacon lest the Great Ship of this World
 Should crash in darkness upon sunken rocks.”

Fra Marium. Specious and hectic ! Hear, O Lords,
 calm reason !

Did not great Pallas by her emblem save
 The city Troy, though doomed by Helen’s rape ?
 But when they snatched the emblem, Troy was
 burnt.

Ergo, the Gods despite this Hydra’s guilt
 Will, for their emblem’s honour hold him safe.

Item, he seeks to make the Cross a peg
 To hang his crimes on, out of reach of justice ;

Item, if ye Magnificents permit
 This sacrilege, ye try not these said theses,
 But God Himself ; item, ye stand condemned
 Crimine Divinae majestatis laesae.

*One of the Eight leans forward, his hand against
 his ear to catch the phrase.*

High treason against the Gods, my lord . . . Aha !
 Beware ! Snatch, then, the Cross. Forbid this
 outrage !

Mazzinghi. Signors, what say ye ? This seems reason.

The Eight.

Aye, aye

Mazzinghi. Usher, remove the cross.

Savonarola.

Consider, Lords :

We yield the same right to the challenger;
Both bear His Cross: let Christ then judge
between us.

Mazzinghi. The Council have decided.

Savonarola.

O ye judges,

Have ye not read "In quo iudicaveritis,
Judicabimini." A crucifix methinks
Had served ye well in purgatorial fire.

[*To Fra Domenico*].

Yield it them, brother: we abide their laws:
We are bid resist not evil, save with good.

*They kiss the Cross and then hand it to the Usher.
At this moment the barrel marked "Oil" is
moved from the pile and rolled away. A roar
of indignation is heard to arise from the crowd.*

Mazzinghi. Most reverend father, see: they grow
impatient;

Meseems you hesitate.

Fra Domenico. No, we are ready, lords:
An't please you, bid Fra Rondinelli forth.

Alberti. Say, Master Secretary: but is the Prior
Named in the writ?

Secretary. Not for the trial, my lord.

Alberti. Then, Frate, keep your cross.

Mazzinghi. His prudence, Signors,
Earns him the right. A prophet less discreet
Had with his own flesh made the rash adventure.

Marion laughs. The Knight smiles.

Savonarola. Nay but, my lords, I stand beside my brother;
Light ye the flames around us both; we fear not.
Though, when at first their taunts and challenge
fired

My brother's hasty zeal, I said, "Perchance
Ye do not well in this. Shall man declare

God's hours, and importune his arm? Shall we,
 To whom our brother's thoughts are dark; unveil
 The unfathomable wisdom of the Power
 Pavilioned in the stars?" But now, O Lords,
 Now that ye have decreed this trial, surely
 God will not see His cause discomfited.
 Yet could ye burn our bodies, scatter abroad
 Our embers, char this flesh and blood of Christ

Holding up the Host.

Fra Mariano. Sacrilege!

Savonarola. [Continuing] Consume this visible world itself,
 Right still were Right,—the central thought of
 God,

The perfect poise, the keystone of life's arch,
 The changeless fashion of the soul that lives.
 This burn thou canst not: lo, God's awful shape
 Takes of thy flames a raiment for his wrath:
 "Clay, wouldst thou pash thy potter? Shards art
 thou!

The wine thy life is poured upon the ground!"

Us he renews with rivers of his love;

Nor is our witness in the burning bush,

But, in your hearts and ours, the still small Voice.

*The barrel marked "Rein" is here rolled away,
 and another and louder roar rises up from the
 crowd.*

Mazzinghi. Eloquence, father, certes; show them proofs:
 They clamour.

Fra Domenico. Yes, O Signors, we are ready.

Mazzinghi. Ebbene! There's the pile. This side
 you enter.

Fra Domenico. An't please you, I say, call brother
 Rondinelli.

Mazzinghi. He is detained.

Savonarola. His challenge brought us here :
He was to enter with us.

*The bell marked "Pulse" is rilled away, and once
more a great shout rises up from the populace.*

Mazzinghi. You hear the crowd :
Between two fires, which do you choose? Betlink
you,

Look to your safety. As a friend I counsel ---

Savonarola. [*Le Fra Domenico*] I much misdoubt me, brother,
Here is conspiracy. . . . Ye lords of Florence,

Are ye as gamesters on the bench of justice

That toss your city's honour and your souls? . . .

The Crowd. Affretta! Affietta!

Mazzinghi. Hark, the storm is rising!
Our power is great in Florence, reverend father :
We cannot curb the tempest.

Savonarola. This is rank!

Where is the challenger?

Mazzinghi. Come! prithee, prithee!

I would not stickle now. These many years

Have ye not prophesied, and fed the crowd

On miracles and portents? Now bethink ye,

The stuff ye gave was somewhat full of wind :

They are ill-nourished, clamorous, hungry, cold :

Their stomachs cry for more. Give it them, prithee,

Or quit us of the consequence.

*Savonarola, Domenico, and Silvestro make no
answer, but kneel in prayer. The murmur
of the crowd is suddenly checked by a clap of
thunder, whereat the Monks look up as if in
appeal to Heaven, and the light shows signs of
alarm. At this moment, lit up by a sudden gleam
in the darkness of the thunder cloud, Ce's figure
appears again in diabolic disguise upon the balcony.*

Cr. [*Singing*]

Didst hear the thunder rack and crack ?

Aha ! Aha !

Old Satan rolled upon his back :

He cursed till all the sky grew black.

" Papa ! Papa ! "

Cries Frate, " Roll away

The powder now, I pray :

There'll be no trial to-day."

Ha-ha ! Ha-ha !

Rushes out of the hall my laughing loudly. A confused noise is heard from the crowd without, which swells steadily during the following dialogue into a roar.

Fra Mariano. What now ? They burn the blessed Host !

Enter Fra Benedetto breathless.

Benedetto. [*To Savonarola, pointing excitedly to the last barrel marked "Gunpowder" and wildly rilled away*]

Look ! Look ! . . .

The crowd is crying we shun the trial.

Savonarola. [*With amazement*] We ?

Benedetto. Take refuge ! Fly ! They say we tear the barrels.

Lazzarini. [*Disguised*] I walk the flames. See ! I divert them : fly !

Savonarola. What ? Are we actors mumming to the crowd ?

God's eye is on us. We abide their laws :

He only——

The Lords, who meanwhile appear to have been replying earnestly to the protests of Alberto, suddenly rise.

Mazzinghi. Sinners and reverend priests, the court is closed:
We stop the trial.

Exeunt hurriedly the eight, with Fra Mariano.
With a yell, the citizens to post Diff's
guard, which has taken away, and heads
for Savonarola. Lucio and Don Benedetto
interpose. More citizens, then the lady,
Valeri, with guard, then a young monk, the
Mink, and several of the rest of the guard,
drives them on the ground.

Valeri. Ho there! Who passes this
Shall taste the steel of me, Franceco Valeri.

Exeunt Savonarola, Diff, and Sisto, be-
tween the lines of Valeri's guard. The crowd
follow them, noisily. Lucio, and a crowd of
the young monks, follow him, and follow him.

SCENE II. *The same. Darkness. The evening of the same*
day. The Piazza is deserted. The citizens, paggini, and
strangers are soundly.

Cries from within. 'To Saint Mark's! To Saint Mark's!
Citizens rush across the Piazza with torches.
Silence falls on the Piazza again, and, in the
dim light of a lamp, a Lady, a tramp, is
seen praying among the laboriously pick-
ing up wood.

Voice from beneath the curtained window. Help, help, help!
Ladri me. What's there?

Issues from beneath the curtain, Nigehm, once
servant of the Strazza, now clad in the garb
of the Frati della Misericordia, black from
head to foot, the eyes only visible.

Niccolini. A wounded friar.

Ladronc. What colour is his frock ?

Niccolini. Wait not to ask :

Wing thee with pity, and fetch a cloth and litter :

His life hangs on thy speed.

Ladronc. Blackfriar ? Oho !

By Hell, I'll draw his leather for his hose.

Niccolini. Back thief ! It is a boy—thy brother : have mercy !

Ladronc. Brother me no damned shaveling brothers, priest !

Pox rot me if the dead guts of a blackfriar

To-night aren't worth a ducat, shrift to boot :

Get thee ! I'll end him.

Niccolini. Through my body then.

Ladronc. Hell blast thee for a cursed Heretic.

Niccolini. It is a Strozzi ; his life is worth a ransom.

Ladronc. Basta ! Thou speakest Tuscan. Come ! go halves.

Niccolini. Haste thee, and take the whole.

Ladronc. By God, I will.

Exit. Clamour without. Enter Ridolfi and his kinsmen, dragging Valori by the neck.

Niccolini retires behind the curtain beneath the rostrum.

Valori. Loose me, ye bandits.

Ridolfi. Know ye not Ridolfi ?

To the lamplight, dog, and look into my face !

There is a smart upon it ; dost remember ?

Blood from thy heart is medicine to that.

Take this, old hound !

Stabs him in the heart. He falls dead. Silence for a moment. Niccolini reissues from behind the curtain.

Niccolini. God! It is good Valori.

A tower has fallen there!

Cries from without. Niccolini withdraws into the recess.

Voices. To Saint Mark's! To Saint Mark's!

Enter another party of Citizens, with torches, pikes, and ladders. One stumbles on the dead body of Valori.

1st Citizen. Sacks in the road: fiends spite them!

2nd Citizen.

'Tis a man.

3rd Cit. Up, bunch!

4th Cit. He's dead.

Ridolfi. [*Leaps on a log of the pile and addresses the crowd*]

God speed you, citizens.

How goes the siege? The Frati still are fighting?

What have ye there? Bah! Spare your picks and ladders.

The convent walls are tough, but powder cracks them:

See! There's an earthquake sleeps in yonder cask.

Points to the barrel of powder rolled to the steps of the Palazzo.

Cits. Heave ho! We'll blow the Frate into hell!

They roll the barrel.

Ridolfi. Messers, what's here? A lopped-off branch,—
a limb,

Kicking the body of Valori.

Forsooth the Frate's right arm! Men of Florence,

This was Valori, a pious stubborn man,

Chief of your State, a thousand years ago,—

Last Candlemas to wit,

Cits. Evviva! Evviva!

Ridolfi. In the reign of Jerome, juggler of renown.

Cits. Down with the Frate! Evviva Ser Ridolfi!

Ridolfi. Give him his due, he served the snivellers well;

And, Messers, as I think, he yet will serve them.

Steps down and lifts the dead body.

Come help me, friends: the corpse would make a speech.

Loud laughter from the crowd. The body is dragged up, and propped against the piles.

A man of weight, forsooth! Speak, Signor, speak!

Harangue the crowd, protest, declaim, denounce:

"Shame of your sins, ye naughty citizens,

Your wine, your laughing women! Mirth is crime.

Harry the Pope; that is the godly sport.

'Tis true we brought the world about your ears,

And snivelled half your trade away; what matter?

Chew ye the cud of Faith, ye hungry cattle."

So would the old hound bark, muzzled withal,

Chapfallen, toothless. . . . Take thou heart, old corpse:

Are there not here ten thousand citizens

Who in your Sniveller see the arm of God?

Well, not ten thousand, — say twice ten instead:

Are there twice ten? . . . Not ten! . . . Say two? . . .

Not one!

Not one but knows your Monk a mountebank.

"Yet stay, good citizens, all is not lost:

Still Charles is Cyrus, — he will save us yet."

Softly, old corpse! To-day the news arrives

King Charles of France is dead!

Great sensation among the citizens.

There's Pisa, corpse:

If thou couldst juggle Pisa back again,

Yet might the town be yours: who knows? . . .

Thou canst not!

Thy jaw drops down, thine eyes glare heavy shame!

Bah! They're begone, and feed the vultures, corpse:

• *Thrusting the body forward fiercely, so that it falls heavily to the ground.*

See, Messers, see! Toss him across the walls:

He'll plug a gap, and stay the incoming tide, --

How long? . . . Evviva Papa! Evviva Libertà!

Cits. Evviva Papa! Evviva Libertà!

Ridolfi. Messers, your humble servant Gian Ridolfi.

Bows and walks to the Palazzo. Exeunt Citizens, dragging the corpse. A great door of the Palazzo is flung open. The light falls in the recess beneath the vestibule. The curtain is drawn, and Nicodem is seen kneeling beside La donna, who lies as she fell, clad in the Red Frack of Fra Dominio. He holds a flask to her lips. The Eight file out of the open door in state, with attendants bearing torches. The Secretary addresses Delfo Spini, who is in arm-our, with officers, also armed.

Secretary. Send them a flag of truce and tell all friars

Now fighting at St Mark's the Eight of Guard •

Are pledged to spare and pardon all the Convent,

If by the last hour of the night the Prior

Fra Jerome, with Fra Dominic and Silvester,

Be, for their heresy, rendered unto trial;

But in default the Convent shall be burnt,

Razed to the ground, and all its inmates slain.

Delfo bows.

Luzzinghen. Stay, Capitano, where is Messer Lapo?

n Officer. Leagues on the Venice road ere now, my lords. •

I quitted him at Porta alla Croce.

• He said he was a citizen of Venice:

• One Machiavelli, a young man of this town,

His pupil, waits him there.

Mazzinghi.

What more?

Officer.

"We stand,"

He said, "upon the threshold of Renown;
Earth, not this rabble, is the field we sow!
Our Gospel is the grasp of Power and Empire!
Addio!" he cried, then left me.

Dolfo.

Ha! I smell 'n!

Had I yon poltroon's head, or he my stomach,
By Bacco, we would crow atop this dunghheap.

Mazzinghi. Is not the day with us? Now, prithee, Dolfo!

Dolfo. That is so.

Mazzinghi. Then why take flight?

Officer.

Signori,

He murmured of a strange catarrh. "Your winds
Are swift to change in Florence," so he said:
"When they are settled South I shall return."

Mazzinghi. South? Ah, from Rome. We know his
strange catarrh.

Dolfo. Gnaf-fè! He shall have cure!

Exeunt. *The Piazza is quiet. The moon rises and
lights up the Campanile, the Duomo, and the
many towers of the city. The distant sound of
a tolling bell is heard, and occasional far-off
shouts. Then the muffled report of an explosion.*

Laodamia. [Awaking with a shrill cry] Girolamo!

Niccolini. Hush for thy life's sake, Mistress.

Laodamia.

Who are you?

Niccolini. Your servant Niccolini once--now God's.

Laodamia. [Faintly] Are you indeed our faithful Niccolini?

Niccolini. Your brow is wounded: does it hurt?

Laodamia

Ah, no.

Niccolini. Then quickly, come! There's peril, Mistress.

Laodamia. [Dazed]

Peril

Where am I?

Niccolini. In the square. I found you here,—
 Hid you until the streets were quiet. . . . Come!
 Now is the time. I lift you. Walk. Now try!

Ladamia. [*Standing*] Let me draw breath.

Niccolini. You suffer?

Ladamia. I am well.

O Niccolini, you loved our Girolamo?

Our little Girolamo, Niccolini,—

The Signorina's playmate, Girolamo?

Niccolini. Yes, Mistress. Do not speak. Be calm.

Ladamia. [*Takes a step forward, then stands suddenly rapt, her arm outstretched, her scarlet hood thrown back*]

Ah, look!

The strange unearthly light!

Niccolini. It is the moon.

Ladamia. [*Rapturously*] If I could tell you? . . . Harken!

Do you hear?

The stones are singing of a thousand tales;

The transeèd spires are choiring to the skies.

Whispers go through them: Oh, they thrill! they quiver!

Their veins are quickened, and the statues breathe.

A wind shakes all my City of the Flowers!

Know you your gardener? Sing, oh sing, my city!

White Peace among the mastiff heads of War,

Sing Campanile! Now you know our secret!

Niccolini. Come!

Ladamia. Here did he stand! They rushed at him!

They stoned him!

I flung myself between. What hope from me?

Then all was changed: a great Light, and a Voice—

Niccolini. The rays fell on you from an open door:

You swooned, and dreamt.

Ladamia. Heaven's door! . . . The great Voice said:

"I—I am with you even unto the end!"

All heard, and sank upon their knees, and worshipped.

Built in the Heavens ere time was, Florence knew

Her prophet—

Niccolini. Mistress, do not dream!

Laodamia. Oh hark!

What is that bell?

Niccolini. Saint Mark's.

Laodamia. For Mass?

Niccolini. No Mass

At this hour, Mistress.

Cries without. To Saint Mark's! To Saint Mark's!

Niccolini. Hark! Hark! They come. Hide mistress.

He drags her back into the recess. More citizens hurry across the Piazza. Silence falls again, and Niccolini looks out cautiously. Laodamia continues speaking with the same exaltation.

Laodamia. Ah! Do they rush to see him,—hang upon his words?

It is a city changed! God's Light has risen!

To expiate my sin,—to die to save him,—

Could I have done it . . . No, but God has saved him;

And he forgave me: into my soul he looked,

Knew me, and spoke; and now by the hand he'll lead me,

All through his city . . . Hark! What cry is that?

Cries from without. Death to him! Death to him! Let the Frate die!

The cries grow gradually louder and fiercer. Laodamia stands erect in her scarlet frock, her looks changing from ecstasy to an ever greater dread and agony. Niccolini hastens to support her. Suddenly she points with horror across the Piazza.

Laodamia. Niccolini! Our little Girolamo! Look!

Enter Savonarola, handcuffed, and with fetters on his feet. He walks with difficulty, thrust forward between a guard of soldiers. Fra Domenico and Silvestro follow. The Mob cast fith at him, crying:

Down with him!—Death to him!—To the flames with him!—Heretic!—Impostor!—Ha! ha! Give us Pisa! Give us Librefatta!—Give us Sarzana!—Charlatan! To the flames!—To the flames!

Niccolini drags Landamia back into the recess just as Savonarola, passing, casts his eyes upon her. She falls back in a swoon. Savonarola and his companions are thrust up the steps of the Palazzo; an iron gate is opened; he enters, and it is shut behind him with a heavy clang. The crowd stands looking at the gate for a space, then gradually withdraws, gesticulating angrily. Once more darkness and silence falls on the Piazza. The Ladrone shuffles across the pavement bearing a litter and cloth. Niccolini peers out from the arras.

Ladrone. Alive?

Niccolini. To hope,—or not to hope it?—Come!

Landamia is lifted upon the litter, covered except as to her face, and borne out.

ACT V

SCENE I.—*Florence. The Hall of the Greater Council (Sala del Consiglio Grande). Mechanics' tools, painters' cradles and wooden screens indicate that work is still proceeding in the Hall. A group of Mechanics stand listening at a heavy side-door.*

1st *Mechanic*. What dost thou hear? An awesome moan?

2nd *Mechanic*. [*With his ear to the crack of the door*] Stay, Master.

1st *Mechanic*. A terrible praying sound?

2nd *Mechanic*. Not so!

1st *Mechanic*. As 'twere,
A ghost a-wrestling in the dark?

2nd *Mechanic*. A ghost?

1st *Mechanic*. A sobbing as of a wind come out o' the sky,
'That's lost its way along thy crooked Calle?

2nd *Mechanic*. I hear a silence, Master.

1st *Mechanic*. Give place: I'll hearken.

After a pause: with his ear to the crack.

Thou'rt right: there's nought.

2nd *Mechanic*. That is as I made out.

3rd *Mechanic*. May it be often ye have heard him, Master?

1st *Mechanic*. A matter of seven times, likely. Holy week

They notched his fiddle twice, they say.

2nd *Mechanic*. That's true
Giacopo botched their tackle. Pulley sagged.

3rd Mechanic. Their racks be cunning gear to make folk
'sing.

2nd Mechanic. As I make out there's not much done to Frate
This se'nnight. Likely that's to get his strength
Against they wring his neck to-morrow.

1st Mechanic. So!

3rd Mechanic. Will they not burn him, Master?

1st Mechanic. Aye, they'll burn him.

Kill body first, and then the soul: that's reason.

Hark ye again.

2nd Mechanic. [After a pause] So ho! So ho!

3rd Mechanic. Ye fool:

A cat mowed on the tetter.

2nd Mechanic. Hush!

A low sob, subsiding to a moan, is heard.

1st Mechanic. That's Frate!

2nd Mechanic. [Issuing from concealment behind a screen]

Ha! ha! ha! *Laughs loudly.*

2nd Mechanic. Beast Beppo, wouldst thou fool us?

I'll sing thy vespers!

3rd Mechanic. Come now! Where be the odds?

My song is good as Frate's.

2nd Mechanic. Nay, for thou

Be'st but the second biggest rogue unhung.

Mechanic. "Tol-le, Domine! Tol-le!" That's
what Frate cried.

Tol-le's the Devil's Christian name in Hell.

3rd Mechanic. He's cracked his pipe since Santa Reparata.

Lord, how he used to thunder from the pulpit!

Mechanic. The sob dies slowly down, to a gurgle in
the throat.

Stop sudden means a swoon: not often that, though:

Your Pope's men know their trade.

Mechanic. They spared his right arm.

1st *Mechanic*. And must. He were a dry well else, and drawn

For nothing.

3rd *Mechanic*. Drawn?

2nd *Mechanic*. What, bones and marrow?

1st *Mechanic*. Ink :

They rack them till they sign.

3rd *Mechanic*. Sign, Master?

1st *Mechanic*. "I, Frate,

Am a false prophet, hypocrite, heretic,

Item, a wolf in sheep's wool."

3rd *Mechanic*. Signed he so?

1st *Mechanic*. As'twere. That rots the withers of his sect.

2nd *Mechanic*. Likely they put the words in after : eh?

1st *Mechanic*. No matter. Signed is signed. Now 'tis his friends

"That hate him most they say. That irks him sore.

2nd *Mechanic*. St Mark's have thrown him up.

1st *Mechanic*. Like sour meat, certes.

So now the Pope has blessed them.

2nd *Mechanic*. Greyfriars more :

They be the fattest.

3rd *Mechanic*. Pope's a rich man, certes.

Think ye he deal in poisons as they say?

Enter from behind, unperceived, Delfo and Cei.

1st *Mechanic*. Aye, by the mass : there's many a pretty fellow
He's blessed and said good-night to.

Delfo and Cei come forward.

Cei. Messers, why not :

Delfo. Gnat-té, why not? All men would kill their foes.

Cei. Sin-weepers, doleful cattle, foes of joy,—

And are not these the enemies of the Pope?

We will be naughty, Messers,—very naughty!

Good men are grievous : wherefore are ye good ?
 Say, art thou happiest singing psalms at vespers,
 Or in thy Nita's bosom ?

4 b Mecham. He says true.

Cer. Doth Holy Father grudge thee Nita, then ?

Nay, he is nesh himself : ask Bella Giulia.

Certes, the Pope buys poisons : that is well.

Shall not the Pope kill sorrow ? Joy shall reign.

Dolfo, I am rapt ! I utter parables !

Ecco, in this room the Pope ! In every house,

In every lane of Florence, the Pope ! 'Tis good

To have the Pope in all your lanes and houses.

What does he there ? Is Bella Giulia with him ?

Aye, she is with him ; he will give your ladies

A supper, a very good supper : that is well.

But stay : what does he here ? I tell you, Messers :

Florence is a shop : he comes to buy a poison :

A drug, a purge, to rid it of the pest

What pest ? The Monk ! Our plague, our curse,
 our Conscience !

For peace and Pisa we have sold the purge :

Thrice blessed Pope, piissime Papa !

Hath not the Pope killed Conscience ?

Dolfo. That is so.

et. Messers, Evviva Gioia ! Long live Joy !

Techanic. Evviva Gioia ! Evviva Gioia !

et. Sing "Viva Gioia, nostro Rè." Ha ! ha !

Laughs loudly. Then suddenly ceases.

What are ye doing here, ye popolani ?

1 Mecham. So't please ye, Sirs, we hearken for the music.

2. What mean they by the music ? Mine, sweet Dolfo ?

Dolfo. Bacco ! What mean ye ?

1 Mecham. So't please ye, Sirs,

Through yonder crack ye hear the Frate groan.

Cei. Know, then, sweet citizens, that music's played,
And henceforth shall ye sing another tune.

Sings, dancing and clacking his heels.

With a tra-la-la

From the gay Papa,

There's an end to the Piagnoni ;

And the world shall spin

On a kiss and a sin,

For the gods are the Bacioni.*

*Bows to the Mechanics, who go out laughing by a
main door in the rear. Ladonna is seen cross-
ing the Hall.*

What tall pale ghost walks yonder ?

Dolfo. Know ye not
Madonna Strozzi ? Rich, by Bacco, - rich !

Cei. Then shall we speak to her, sweet Dolfo ? . . Ha !
Vanished into the wall !

Dolfo. Gnat-te ! It was a ghost !
Come, 'Cecco, come !

Cei. [*Pausing in front of an inscription on the walls, below which
hangs a painter's cradle*]

See, they would paint this out !

Says, Frate built this Justice Hall, sweet Dolfo.

Dolfo. Its walls run crooked like the hogs it styes :

Yon Monk goes straight,--a stubborn caitiff, 'Cecco.

To see a brave man racked, I do not like it.

Cei. Nor I. Yet must he perish !

Dolfo. That is so.

Enter through a third (side) door Cini and Niccolini.

Dolfo and Cei go out by the same exit.

Niccolini. " Deeds burn," he said, " the wings of con-
templation :

* Big kisses.

One fairest face in youth I looked upon ;
 Since then I have lived to see the face of God."
 And when I answered, "None may look on God,"
 "Beauty is God," he said : "To Him all love,
 All art, mounts up, but most the art of living."

Cim. Had he a Beatrice, think you ?

Niccolini. He, my lord ?

He was all holiness !

Cim. Her beauty led
 Dante until he saw the face of God.

Niccolini. Dante of triumph sang, but he of failure :
 "The canvas of my life is cut across :
 God's face I may not see ; for such my sin,
 God in my pains forsook me."

Cim. Now by the Mass,
 Calvary heard that cry !

Niccolini. And for the sins,
 His blackest shames our white.

Cim. Let God then answer.
 We pay our servants better.

Niccolini. No, my lord !
 If life were rounded here, all reckonings paid,
 All just, all perfect, Time and the Dome of Heaven
 Would shrink to a cabin. Natheless be consoled :
 Either the Just Man, life's unfolded flower,
 Hath of the All, his parent, nought in kind,—
 Either this part is greater than that whole,
 This blossom tells no story of that root,—
 Or in the soul of things pure justice reigns,
 Each sows, each suffers, sole and individual,
 As each life soweth, so shall each life reap,
 And Conscience, groping darkly through this sphere,
 Fed with all freshets from the fount of Light,
 Shapes and incarnadines the undying Rose.

Cini. May it be so ; or else by the Mass I swear
 Yon Centaur stabled in St Peter's stall,
 Merry among his wantons, wins the day.
Niccolini. Enough ! And now, my lord, one prayer ; one
 only :

Entreat the Council that my brother lie
 This last night of his life, not in the dungeon,
 Spat on by thieves and cutthroats, mocked and
 taunted :—

Grant him at least God's silence for his sleep,
 And for his tortured frame my knee to rest on :
 No pillow for the head that saved the city !

Cini. The Council sit. Mazzinghi's mouth is hard :
 I have the snaffle for it, nathless. Wait !

Exit Cini. Laodamia issues from behind a screen.

Laodamia. You asked ?

Niccolini. Not wisely if for you. Go, mistress !

Laodamia. I do no wrong. . . . To see him nevermore :

Ah, Niccolini, no ! I should go mad.

Niccolini. Say "evermore" : thou'lt see him evermore.
 'Till then be patient.

Laodamia. I am not good : no, no !

Niccolini. For his sake, then !—Still to the man so fond,
 So heedless of his cause.—Think, Mistress, think !
 He is the world's, not ours.

Laodamia. Yes, he is mine !

You shall not cheat me ! I gave my life for him !

O, Niccolini, there is that between us,

My spirit, near his, would fold and comfort him

Although he knew not. So the stricken viol

Feels out and throbs upon its sister chord.

Niccolini. How would they judge him, friends and foes,
 alike,

Were you discovered ?

Laodamia. Foes,—they have done their worst :
 Friends,—'twas his politics they loved, not him.
 You, Niccolini, I, and Benedetto—
 We only are left : we three and God.

Niccolini. No, Mistress,—
 Many !

Laodamia. Then let them rise and fight,—the cravens !
 They sit at home and patter prayers, while he
 Perishes ! . . . Oh, and is it much to ask, —
 'This last touch of his hand, - our Girolamo's ?
 Has sorrow made my visage then so vile
 That you, who never said me nay before,
 Deny me ?

Niccolini. Footsteps ! He returns.

Laodamia retires behind the screen. Re-enter Cini.

Cini. They yield :
 The three condemned descend the stairs.
 Now, at this moment, lest we plot escape,
 A guard is closely drawn around the palace :
 No man can pass. But here, the Council pledge it,
 This last night of his life you are alone
 With him and God : their only mercy ; take it,
 You who have—What is this ? My God !

Niccolini. Your eyes
 Are fixed ; your lips grow white ! What terrible
 thoughts
 Clutch at your heart ?

Cini. [*Gazing at the inscription*] O felon city ! Ingrate !
 Hearken ! These words he wrote who gave our
 State

Freedom, and builded for its use this Hall.

“ City whose King is God, if thou shalt keep

Holy this temple of justice, that no crime,

However vile, may be denied appeal,

Then shall thy stones be trod by a nation free,
And blossom with fair harvests of their toil ;
But if —

Niccolini. Nay, read no farther. When beneath
This writing, he who wrote it, lies condemned,
Traduced, without appeal, before the world,
Guiltless, and martyred by the State he saved,
Know that his soul forgave them all their wrong.
The rest upon the walls of Time and Space,
God's greater Hall of Justice, stands inscribed :
O Florence, thine the sentence !

Con. Fare ye well !

*Exit Con. A hall porter looks two doors from
within, and goes out by the heavy side door,
looking that from without. Lazzarina comes
forth again.*

Niccolini. Heaven has decided, Mistress. See, the doors
Are closed upon us both : you have your will.
Vex not with knowledge of your womanhood
The white breast of his soul laid bare to Heaven.
This marriage of your soul with his shall be
Even, as the dead hand of a bridegroom laid
In hers that loved him : thus, — no more. You
pledge it ?
Have you the strength ?

Lazzarina. Heaven help me !

Niccolini. Quickly then.
*Niccolini draws off his black frock, which covers
him from head to feet, save for eyelets and
breathing-holes. Lazzarina does it. There
is another similar frock beneath, in which
Niccolini remains.*

Niccolini. Daughter, hold firm your spirit. I go to bring
A shape you know not ; one, more ghost than man,

Pallid from wrestle with the world's black sins.

Now is your trial: no sound, no sob; remember!

*Nicodem goes to the heavy side door. Laramia
retires behind the screen. Savonarola with
Demetrius and Friar Silvester come forth assisted
by gaolers. His face is turned as he speaks
with his fellow-sufferers.*

Savonarola. [To Demetrius] Nay, brother; no harangue;
but bear all meekly.

As did our Lord, lest strife ensue and bloodshed.

Demetrius and Silvester. Brother, we will, we will!

Savonarola. And since, in torture,
(God knows my fall, and shall not you, my brothers?)

Since in the frailty of my flesh, for well

Ye know my body is weak, since then I uttered

Somewhat against our cause, soon reaffirmed,

Some doubts of God's upholdings in this work;

And sorely I fear for this that God forsakes me:

Pray for me, brothers!

Demetrius and Silvester. We will! . . . Thy benediction!

Savonarola. I am all shame, no longer worthy, brothers.

Demetrius. God pardoned Holy Peter, who denied him,
Suffering no agony.

Savonarola. True, and ye pardon:

Christ's love is more than ours. Then, in God's
name:

*They kneel, and with them Nicodem. He lifts his
right hand.*

Benedicat vos Omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius, et
Spiritus Sanctus. Amen.

II. Amen!

*Exeunt Friar Demetrius and Silvester. Nicodem
remains with Savonarola, whose face is still
turned away.*

Niccolini. Father, thou art weary : rest upon my knee.
Savonarola. Christ bless thee for the thought.

He kneels in prayer.

Niccolini. Stay but one moment.

He retires behind the screen. Laodamia, disguised, comes forth in his place, bearing a mat. Savonarola rises and with difficulty walks toward her. A faint cry escapes her. He pauses and looks up at his inscription on the wall ; then in deep resolute accents :

Savonarola. Jerusalem ! Jerusalem ! 'Thou that killest the prophets,

And stonest them that are sent unto thee,

How would my Lord have gathered thy children together,

Even as a hen her brood beneath her wings !

' Ye would not ! ' Lo, your house is left unto you
 Desolate !

Laodamia seats herself on a step, and spreads out the mat ; he lays his head mutely upon her knee. The lights in the hall are extinguished. He sleeps. The curtain descends. It rises again. The dim rays of early dawn fling a cold light on the two figures. He is still sleeping. The doors are flung open. Enter gaolers and men-at-arms.

Gaoler. Up, dog ! Sorcerer, wake thee. Come and burn !

Savonarola rises.

Savonarola. Christ keep thee, brother. I have slept ;
 and youth

And hope came back to me ; and it was well.

He is rudely jostled out between the gaolers. The two black figures pass out unnoticed.

ENE II.—*Florence. The front of the stage is occupied with the Loggia (or Portico) dei Lanzi. The rear is concealed by a great curtain. But, on the right hand corner, a vista is exposed of the Ringhiera (or Platform) in front of the Palazzo Vecchio. A Mechanic is placing the seats under the direction of the Secretary. Enter Mazzinghi.*

Mazzinghi. Good morrow, Master Secretary.

Secretary.

Good morrow.

Mazzinghi. A fair May morning, is it not? Heaven smiles

To see the winter banished from our State.

There is a sea beneath us, and the waves

Are reeky heads.

Secretary. So dense the crowd, they say

Many will be crushed.

Mazzinghi. Faugh! How they smell, yon cattle!

Strew perfume lest the nauseous odour grieve

The delicate nostrils of the Holy Office.

Secretary. Certes, my lord, to-day should Rome smell roses.

A messenger hands a letter to the Secretary: he opens and glances at it.

This from the Signor Strozzi: he asks a seat,

And leave, by right of age and rank, to speak

Before the notables and Papal Envoys.

Is it your will to grant it?

Mazzinghi. What think you?

He is revered. A word from him might scotch

"What reptiles of the Frate's faction lurk,

Whetting their fangs to strike us.

Secretary.

Doubtless, Signor,

If to that end he speak.

Mazzinghi.

Nay, that is certain :

Grey hairs are never zealots, nor the rich

Prone to stake fortune on the die of treason.

Secretary. Last night I was at Michael Angelo's.

Being esteemed a judge of art, my lord,

The illustrious sculptor craved my help and counsel

On certain figures. Admirable, Signor.

And, by the way, he took the leave to show me

The Strozzi's famous mantello of state :

A Pantheon in silk, repaired, he said,

For this occasion.

Mazzinghi

I have heard of it.

Secretary. Giotto, Ghiberti, Luca and Botticelli,

Figured its woof with all the city's story

Ere Angelo's eyes beheld it ; and, says he,

Never has any Strozzi worn the robe

Save for the utterance of a pregnant speech

To mark the bright and memorable day

Wherein our commonwealth is magnified.

Mazzinghi. Ebbene ! This confirms me. Grant his wish.

Place here a chair of state to fit his rank.

Pointing to the curtained corner in the Loggia.

Ebbene, I say : for does not all go well ?

What better auspice than that this old lord,

Eldest and most revered of all the city,

Comes to the burning, flames out at the close

In all the lustre of the antique robe,

Lending to our masterstroke of policy

The weight and sanction of his ancient house ?

Secretary. Ah, truly !

Mazzinghi. Prithee, Master Secretary,
And whose is this pavilion?

Moving down the Ringhiera.

Secretary. Please, my lord,
The Papal Envoy's.

Mazzinghi. So! And he tops us all.
Rome has our homage: we are paid to kneel.
And these?

Secretary. Alberti's seat, and yours, my lord.

Mazzinghi. But why this curtain?

Secretary. The ladies asked it, Signor:
They strip the Frate.

Mazzinghi. Behold, ye gods and gamins,
A monk to laugh at, and a world that laughs!
But yesterday his frock was Caesar's purple.

Secretary. Indeed, there will be sport. The crowd is merry.

Mazzinghi. As for the ladies, Master Secretary,
They begged a curtain,— they will steal a drink.

Secretary. Hence to the chieftains of my chiefs I bow;—
See here!

Mazzinghi. [*Peering through the arras, which discloses a view
of the Piazza and a scaffold*]

Ebbene! . . . Ha! what's yonder? Behold!
Now by my head, wouldst make this place a Gol-
gotha?

Messer, you mock us.

Secretary. I, my lord? Indeed
I have done nothing. Here is the artisan:
Ask him.

Mazzinghi. [*Pointing through the curtain*] What call ye that?

Mechanic. So please my lord,

A scaffold.

Mazzinghi. It is a cross.

Mechanic. That's as they say.

Mazzinghi. They must not say it : the structure must be changed.

Mechanic. So please my lord, there be some things ye may,
And some ye may not do.

Mazzinghi. Truce o' thy riddles !
Change it, and quickly. Time will overtake us.

Mechanic. We tried, so please my lord.

Mazzinghi. How tried ?

Mechanic. We hacked her.

Mazzinghi. "Hacked," fellow,—“hacked” ?

Mechanic. Against it be a witch.
No telling what they'll get inside.

Mazzinghi. Thou blockhead !
Didst thou not build that bungle up thyself ?

Mechanic. Natheless, she be alive, and hath a mother :
Angelo, the sculptor, saith it : that is strange.
In Judee dwelt her dam.

Mazzinghi. He fools thee, fellow.
It is a thing of wood and ropes and rivets.

Mechanic. And if the blessed wafer turn to flesh,
May not your timber ? Sure, she cried i' the night
Like a woman in her pangs ; and, so it please ye,
They say she'll breed, and gibbets fill the land.

Mazzinghi. Gibbets to hang thee, dolt. Cut off the top.

Mechanic. So please my lord, and where shall Frate hang ?

Mazzinghi. Remove one arm then.

Mechanic. Be there not three to drop ?

Mazzinghi. Add flanks or flanges.

Mechanic. Crowd be there, my lord.

Enter Alberti.

Mazzinghi. [To *Mechanic*] Fool, thou shalt pay for this.
Remove those seats :
They are too crowded.

Secretary. Signor, by your leave,
The Papal Envoy here unfrocks the Frate:
Shame's edge is sharpest there: all eyes must see it.
'Tis half the pageant.

Mazzinghi. Ten feet serves for that.

Secretary. But, Signor, by your leave, the rule of Art
Is to enhance with room and isolation
The central figure in your canvas.

Mazzinghi. Prithee!

In whose bottega hast thou studied art?

Secretary. The painter Ghirlandajo in his fresco—

Ah, pardon! *Betrays embarrassment.*

Mazzinghi. What fresco?

Secretary. "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Mazzinghi. Messer, do you jest with me?

Secretary. No, Signor, no!

Mazzinghi. Christ stripped of raiment: Ha! I know
—the daub!

Here Pilate sits: Alberti, thou! And here
Caiaphas,—my seat,—own it traitor!—mine!

Secretary. My lord, I had no thought of this.

Mazzinghi. Thou caitiff!

Wouldst charge it on my conscience? It is false!

Alberti. Did I not warn thee? Also in the night

My wife woke shrieking: "Ah! The Cross!
The Cross!"

She dreamt a great Cross hung above the city,
And thereupon, colossal, menacing,
One crucified: His vasty shadow lay
Huge on our streets, and, as the sun went down,
Darkened all homes; and folk ran to and fro,
And leant and listened in the mart and churches,
Hearing the footfalls of a host unseen,
That from our trade, our crafts, our freedom, plucked

The core, and in the socket sowed a blight,
Which bred --

Mazzinghi. Basta! to work! This thing is done.
Though yonder gibbet hang the Son of God,
This thing is done, —we cannot now retreat.

The tolling of a bell is heard.

The bell! Move on! We dally.

Alberti. Aye, move on!
Behind a ruin, and in front a hell.

As they are about to go out enter Cei.

Mazzinghi. Ho, 'Cecco, welcome! On the day of trial
Ye sang a lullaby to calm the crowd:
See, man, a cross up yonder?

Cei. Faith, I see it.

Mazzinghi. Out with thy lute; there's havoc in the
omen.

Yon popolani have the ague fit:
Troll them a lay to make Medusa laugh:
Thy maddest freak— thy wildest fantasy.

Cei [*Strums his lute a moment; the crowd scramble on to the
Ringhiera, and peer beneath the curtain of the Loggia:
he waltzes grotesquely up and down singing*]

Now there dwelt at San Marco a Monk, oh!

Who loved not our Santo Papa;

He would sing you a Dimittis Nunc, oh!

In the arms of a sweet fal-lal-la!

Ho the canto, the ranto, the manto!

On the cross for a wager di tanto

He would scrawl you his name with a schianto,—

“I am Jerome, Papa di già!”

*Loud laughter is heard in the rear and the throng
scuffles to get nearer to the singer. He resumes.*

Now, pardee, and what of this Monk, oh?

• Barabbas we will not release:

The robber shall drink of our giunco,

And we of the bumper of peace.

• Ho the canto, the ranto, the manto!

On the cross he shall swing for a ---

Ceases suddenly, and with a cry of anguish

Bianchet-ta!—Ah!—What have they done to thee

*A beautiful girl is borne on to the Ringburs, pale
and almost lifeless.*

A Doctor. Crushed by the crowd who pressed to hear
the song.

Cat. [*Pa a nately*] Give her—give her to me! She is
dead!—She is dead!

*Do physicians, snatching her in his arms, and carrying
her to the right-hand corner of the Leggia,
where, spreading out his mouth, he lays her
down, to cover her dead, and fans her excitedly
to revive her motion. The physicians: the
doctors, Almandale, Ottemati, and many
of the doctors, troop in and fill the seats in the
left of the Leggia. Ruffini is among them.
They converse.*

1st Lady. Horrible!

2nd Lady. Dead?

3rd Lady. Or dying.

1st Lady. A low class person.

2nd Lady. The Frate's Magdalen, so once they called her.

1st Lady. Her sins are judged. . . . And he?

2nd Lady. Cei, the Fantastic;

• A man of rank.

They whisper, as though shocked.

An Eccentric. The episode, Signora,

Is prelude to our pageant. Here you see
 Pan with the pale nymph Echo in his arms.
 The hooves in modesty his hose conceals ;
 The horns are an open secret.

Ridolfi. Cei as Pan !

Ha ! ha ! To the life ! A city Pan, to the life !

1st Lady. Dio mio ! what is this Pan they talk about ?

Eccentric. A pranksome god much worshipped in the land,
 Who capered before Bacchus, which is Latin
 For Borgia,—Holy Father,—God of Orgies.
 He sees a vision and his antics pause.

[*The ladies titter.*]

Attention dames ! This is a pious rite.

Three monks are offered on the shrine of Bacchus.

2nd Lady. Ciel ! The Signor jests.

Eccentric. Believe me, no.

See, Echo dies away,—Pan tears his locks,

Frenzied with grief : behold him !

1st Lady. Buffonaccio !

Eccentric. [*His tone gradually changing from banter to a wild earnestness*]

Sweet Echo, cities know thee, and the woods ;

The shepherd sings thy name among the hills.

Thou callest answer from the lonely crags :

He scours the rock, he searches not his heart.

Vision and Voice, or dying Magdalen,—

Monks and Fantastics, we all go after thee :

Through flood and briar, through rack and cross we go :

To clasp our bride, the baffling Loveliness ;

Whom, when they banish her from fane and wood,

We seek still choiring in the stars of God.

Signore, I am moved : make way ; I quit you.

1st Lady. The man is mad.

3rd Lady. [*In an awed undertone*] 'Tis Angelo the sculptor.

Alberti's Wife. [Rising and pointing wildly through the arras]
 The Cross! The Cross! Did I not dream of it?
 And now behold!

She cries and laughs hysterically.

Alberti. Orsù! Be silent, wife!
 [She is led on sobbing. He addresses the bystanders]
 This madness takes her from too much devotion.
 She lost a child . . . pray understand . . . and since,
 Psha! It is crosses everywhere! Poor soul,
 She'd see them in the twig that hangs a scarecrow!

Exit.

1st Lady. [Peering through the curtain] Look!

2nd Lady. She spoke truth!

3rd Lady. A cross, clear as the morning!

1st Lady. He excused himself.

3rd Lady. He bit his lip, and blenched.

2nd Lady. He turned first red, then livid.

1st Lady. All for a dream.

4th Lady. A dream about a cross.

2nd Lady. They call him "Pilate."

4th Lady. And Pilate had a wife.

2nd Lady. And Pilate's wife

Dreamt in the night before they crucified

The Christ.

A sudden horror of silence falls upon the assembly, broken by hysterical cries. Cries of "The Cross! The Cross!" are heard far in without. Enter Roberto Strozzi, with Lardonna. He is led to the chair of state. Attention is drawn to his Robe by whisper and gesticulation. Attendants enter and strew scent and rose-leaves before the Papal envoy's chair. Mazzinghi appears again, and picking up the fallen lute brings it to Cei as he leans over Bianchetta.

Mazzinghi. 'Cecco, I fear these sudden silences.

Here is thy lute : it is a bag of gold,
And every note ye fling among the crowd
A golden florin. Up, man ! Sow the air
With frolic ! Laugh for thy life ! Make revel : else
Yon damnèd Cross may wreck us.

Gen. I sing no more.

She is dead, my Bianchetta, she is dead !

Suddenly springs up and snatches the lute.

Mazzinghi, I will sing, yes, I will sing.

Sings wildly.

Madness and Death ! O Scent of blossoms
flying !

Rank weeds and flowers of flame, dead roots
and darnel !

Roses and rue ! O city mad and dying,

Thou canst not numb our senses to this
charnel !

Dead, and the Frate's name upon her lips !

Mine too ! Damn them, they prayed for us together,
Prayed while we plotted, — aye, they knew it !

[*Cast his lute on the ground and tramples it into pieces*]

Break, lute !

Lie on her breast ! My heart, my heart is broken !

Ah ! Bianchetta ! —

Mazzinghi. Shame ! thou girl ! thou gannet !

This for a chit, — a wanton !

Gen. Nay, Mazzinghi, nay !

The gods have ne'er surprised thee in the dark.

Mazzinghi. Herald, thy blast ; Monsignor waits upon us.

The Herald blows his trumpet.

Mazzinghi. [*Loudly to a bystander that the assembly may
overhear*]

Messer, it seems the stress o' the day turns mad

Women of both sexes. Natheless all is well:
The hour has struck when Justice will be done.

*Enter the Gentilmen, and Magistracy of Florence,
the Papal Envoy, Roderigo, and the Bishop
of Vienna, with others. Alberto, Mazzinghi,
and the Secretary take their places with
the Magistracy. The Herald draws on then
Hail.*

Herald. Come forth, Jerome, Dominic, and Sylvester,
*Savonarola called, I would not have you seek Domenico
and Silvestro: Neither are they come.*

Bishop. By the commandment of the Pope of Rome
I separate ye from the Holy Church
Militant and Triumphant.

Savonarola. Militant, yes;
Triumphant, no: that is not thine to do.

Roderigo. Let them be stripped.

Savonarola. Nay, spare me this! O spare me!
My King's dear livery, this I leave not wrunged!
*And demand yet if ye will strip from the King
His banners, and if that they are stripped
of their pride, remove not only our
we gentlemen, but our livery.*

Mazzinghi. Jerome of Ferrara, Dominic
Of Pescia, and Sylvester called Savarola,
Whereas ye are sentenced by the Pope, and now
To our secular arm for punishment delivered,
We the respectable Magistrates of Florence
(Franceco Cini absent from our college),
Having observed all offices of justice,
And well considered all your infamous crimes,
Do now decree that ye shall die the death
Of malefactors on a common gibbet,

And that your souls be hunted from your bodies,
Banished, and utterly destroyed by fire.

The Executioner again shackles their hands. Citizens leap wildly on to the Ringhiera, and strike Savonarola on the face, and kick him.

Citizens. [*Promiscuously*]. Show us a miracle . . . Give us Pisa . . . Give us Leghorn . . . Give us Sarzana. Give us Libretatta . . . Yah! yah! Frate, the Devil won't help thee now! . . . Ha! Ha! Ha! Prophecy who struck thee!

An officer enters, from the stage.

Marzucchi. Now do thy duty, executioner.

Romano. Stay, Signor! It has pleased his Holiness

Our pious and most clement Pope, to grant, —
Amazing grace! — to these most impious men
A plenary indulgence for their sins.

[*To the Monk.* Do ye accept this pardon?

Savonarola. It is well.

Romano turns with a look of triumph to the Magistracy, who applaud, and laugh. Niccolini proves a crucifix to Savonarola's lips.

Savonarola. Jesu, alone with thee! Our sinful lives
Humbly we fling down at thy Cross's feet,
Thou only hope, thou ransom of the world!

They pass from the Ringhiera, and become invisible behind the curtain of the Loggia. There is an expectant hush. All eyes are eagerly bent towards the hidden Piazza. The ladies in the Loggia peer through the curtain.

Ridolfi. Ladies, by your leave, when I shall draw the veil,
Know that the State is ridded of the pest.

Laodamia. [*Springs up suddenly; and in a clear ringing voice*] Girolamo!

Now, now shalt thou behold the Face of God!

1st Lady. Who cried?

2nd Lady. Hush! Rich is a Piagnoni dame.

Ricolfi. Ladies, behold! the ropes have dropped their load:
The flames took up the offal of their flesh.

*The curtain, suddenly drawn, reveals a vast fire,
and in the midst a staff lit, surmounted by a
large cross. Three popes hang empty from the
arms of the cross. The Palazzo is a panthe-
on. As the flames subside, and the
Maggistrates rise to gaze, Mazzinghi is heard
speaking.*

Mazzinghi. Envoy of Rome, and fellow-citizens,

Now may we breathe in peace. Monsignor, see
[Pointing to the fire] The flame of love our city bears
for Rome!

Florence is proved true daughter of Holy Church.

Ricolfi. My lord, you are thanked. Pisa is given to
Florence.

Leghorn, Sarzana, Livornetta, all

Are yours; also the tithes of all your churches.

Mazzinghi. Our cup of gratitude is overbrimmed.

[To Secretary] Bid that the venom of the Frate's dust
Be quenched in the Arno; burn his books and
writings;

Let Lethe drown the memory of his name;

Let it be flogged from every infant's tongue;

And all suspected of his heresy,—

Let them be shunned like lepers.

Secretary. So it please you.

Mazzinghi. [To Ricolfi] Monsignor, by your leave I
will present

My lord of Strozzi, our oldest citizen,

[To Strozzi] Signor, his reverence sees in your white
locks

The snow upon the peak of our esteem,
 And in your robes our Story in Brocade :
 This day shall add one chapter, and the woof
 Tell how these flames burn open all our ports ;
 How, smiled upon by gracious Rome, our
 Trade

Flie, like a weaver's shuttle through the earth :
 Is it not well, my lord ? Is it not well ?

Str. 3d. [*Hand to ear*] Well ? What is well ?

Mus. mch.

You hear their shouts :

Str. 2d.

I hear

The rumour of the Avenging Furies' wings !

Mazzinghi. Truly a tragic vengeance on his crimes.

Str. 3d. Our Tragedy, his Comedy Divine.

Mus. mch. A comedy whereat all Florence smiles.

Str. 1d. For this soul chose, not power, not wealth, but
 Right.

Above the reek of yonder pile he soars,
 And, with the starry children of the sky,
 Shines o'er our shame for ever !

Mazzinghi.

Me, or ?

Str. 2d.

We too,

We had our choice, and prostituted Right
 For Riches. Jezebels, I cannot go !

[*Pointing to the cit. as they pass away across the
 Piazza*]

Troop to your field of blood, your dogs of Jezreel !

Mazzinghi. Methinks, Monsignor, the old man hath the
 bile.

[*To Str. 3d.*] Natheless, my lord, to-morrow a
 thousand looms

With busy tongues shall sing a loud "Huzza !"
 Deeming our work to-day the town's salvation,
 And the Pope's writ the charter of our joy.

Strazzi. Lo, from the deep another voice shall sound !
 Lo, on thy walls another writing gleam !
 Mene ! Mene ! Thelkel ! Uphalan !
 Finished is thy kingdom, — weighed in the balance,
 Weighed not found wanting, — given to the Mede
 and Persian !
 Thou shalt explore a zone, a lifeless gulf ;
 Ghosts of thy greaves still haunt thee, and thy stone
 Majestically mock thy fallen wife,
 Yea, as a king who buys ignominious peace,
 Crouched high, — have, among an ostracized
 No doubt thou be, O Florence ! — dead thy Freedom,
 Perished thy craft, and it is now to endure
 One voice, one cry, one cry, one plea to man,
 The old price of our freedom, — we have,
 Doomed to outlive the conqueror and king,
 Hardly the old bold rashness, hardly the
 Save but blind phantoms of our old dream,
 Crouching, — to see the evening of our fate
 Dawn, Day, and Dark and Night one very tone,
 Dawn that hath no Wake nor night ; Day tired of toil ;
 Dusk glad because of sleep ; and Night, — ah, night !
 When left thou me, my Father, my Mother,
 Grateful is dumb ; happy the, God wot,
 Who sleeps in stone while shame and vice endure !
 Who feel, who see, on earth, are now no more !
Mazzoni. A ghlo old man, Mazzoni ! Who comes
 here ?
 A corpse to dam a torrent. — By St. Anna !
 We are saved from drowning in a delugnant !

A voice. Enter Lupa, lifeless, borne by two men, and with them
Delfo Spini. His dead Lord drops a bag of money.
His father weeps.

Mazzinghi. What! A swashbuckler of the snivelling crew, —

Uh, Capitano, eh?

Delfo. Gnaf-fe! not so.

Lapo's a great man, Lapo wove his webs;

Also he was a putty-livered rogue.

Mazzinghi. [*Uncovering the face.*] Now, by my head!

What, Lapo? Slain? By whom?

Delfo. 'Twas I — I slew him; — ye, he hath his wages.

I do not like a man that sells his friends.

Strozzi. [*Casting off his mantle of States, and laying it on Lapo's body.*]

Such was he? — Then I pray you, citizens,

That nations, passing by, may gaze and learn,

Bury him regal in this robe of art,

And on his tomb inscribe these words: "Here lies

A master brain: plots filled it once, now worms;

A master hand: the gold ta'en from its grasp;

A craven breast: a sword has pierced it through;

A faithless heart: for this man sold his friends.

Sumptuous he lies; art serves him for a pall;

God rest his bones! His name is TRAY!

Mazzinghi. [*Strongly.*] You have done, my lord? — Then
look upon your daughter.

Strongly, her part, and all'd, Strozzi kneel beside her.

